



New Standard Teacher Training Course

PART THREE

The Teacher's Study of the Life of Christ

**BY
WADE CRAWFORD BARCLAY**

**WILLIAM BRIGGS
QUEEN AND JOHN STREETS
TORONTO**

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NEW STANDARD TEACHER TRAINING COURSE

*The books of this Course are based on outlines adopted
by the Sunday School Council of Evangelical
Denominations, and approved by the
International Sunday School
Association*

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OF THE

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BY
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LESSON I

THE TEACHER'S STUDY OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST

In the modern Sunday school everything is for the sake of the pupil. "The need of the pupil is the law of the school." In accord with this law the growing tendency in recent years has been for Teacher Training courses to take the child as the point of departure. Since this is confidently believed to be a sound principle, the course of which these lessons are a part begins with the study of the pupil. The study of the principles of teaching naturally follows. Having completed these sections of the course, we come to a study of lesson materials.

Contributing to this new emphasis upon child study has been the recognition that some of the most ineffective teaching of children has been done by the people who knew their Bible best. They had an adult's acquaintance with the Bible, but they did not know children. Being ignorant of child nature, its interests and needs, they were almost wholly unsuccessful in teaching the Bible. The pious Puritan knew his Bible, but he did not know his child, and as a result he was often a failure as a religious teacher.

THE TEACHER'S STUDY OF THE BIBLE

How should a teacher study the Bible? Assuming that a teacher, or one preparing to be a teacher, has made a study of child nature, how should he study the Bible? What form of Bible study will be most helpful to him *as a teacher*? In the past it has been generally assumed that the best methods of Bible study for teachers are those most profitable to any Christian. We cannot allow this idea to remain unchallenged. The teacher should study the Bible

in those ways which will aid him most in using it effectively in nurturing the religious life of his pupils. He has placed himself in the way of obeying Jesus' command, "Feed my lambs," and his first duty is to prepare himself to do it. He will not neglect the study of the Bible for the sake of strengthening his own inner life and for this purpose he will study it as any other Christian studies it. But he has taken for his motto, "For their sakes I sanctify myself," and having done so he studies the Bible in the light of the needs of his pupils.

The teacher's question in Bible study. The teacher's problem becomes that of the selection of Biblical material for each period of the pupil's development. His question in Bible study is this: The pupil being what he is, what lesson materials will most effectively meet his religious needs? It is evident that a complete answer to this question requires a study of the entire Bible. It also requires the study of other lesson material than that contained in the Bible. A study of such broad scope is obviously impossible within the limits of an elementary Teacher Training course. But even in a brief course a beginning can be made. It is, therefore, proposed that we take a part of the Bible, the gospels, which present the earthly life of our Lord, and examine them in the light of our acquaintance with the interests and needs of pupils of the various grades.

WHAT THIS COURSE OF LESSONS IS

This course of lessons is Bible study. It is not primarily a study of Bible facts. It is a study in appreciation. It is a search for life values. It is a typical example of the proper selection and use of Biblical material for the grades.

Sunday school teachers are not required to select their own lessons. Lessons already prepared are placed in their hands for teaching. But it is exceedingly important that

teachers shall not be ignorant of the reasons why particular lessons have been chosen for use with children of a given age. To teach effectively, teachers must be acquainted with the principles upon which the choice of lessons has been made. *They need to know the nature of the child and they need also to know the nature of the lessons*, and the reasons why particular lessons are believed to meet the needs of the child. Beyond this, they need also to know the interrelation of these two; that is, how the particular lessons chosen work out in the life of the child, what service they perform in his life.

This course of lessons is method study. It is a study in how to teach the life of Christ. But it is method study in the large, not in an exact or detailed sense. It presupposes some acquaintance with the general principles of the learning process and discusses them only incidentally. It presupposes also that a study has been made of the religious needs of the pupil. Our first question, therefore, is: What kind of lessons are required for the satisfaction of these needs? In this question we have in mind actual, present needs of the pupil. We seek lesson materials that will help him in the solution of present practical problems; that will enter immediately into his life in helpful service.

Our second question is: Is there material in the gospels which answers to this description? This is followed by these inquiries: What is this material? Why is it fitted to meet the pupil's need? How does it work out in his life?

WHY THE LIFE OF CHRIST IS CHOSEN FOR STUDY

Christ is central in Sunday-school teaching. It is eminently fitting that in the teacher's study of the Bible a beginning should be made with the life of Christ. The purpose of the Sunday school is to aid its pupils to know him whom to know aright is life eternal. A school implies

learners. Members of the Sunday school are learners of a particular kind; they are disciples. Its members attend that they may learn of Christ, believe in him, and become like him. The goal is Christlikeness in character and in service.

The purpose of the Sunday school in common with all schools is *to aid its pupils to attain knowledge, character, and efficiency*. But we are Christians, and the Sunday school is a Christian school. As Christians, Jesus Christ is to us "the way, the truth and the life." As a Christian school, the *knowledge* which the Sunday school seeks to impart is *the truth as it is in Jesus Christ*; the *character* which it seeks to create is *the life manifested in him*; the *efficiency* which it aims to develop is *efficiency in his service*.

It is the purpose of the Sunday school to aid its pupils in attaining knowledge. It seeks to lead them into possession of fundamental religious beliefs, into right views of God, of man, of human duty and destiny. "I am the truth," said Jesus. More than ever before the Christian world in our age accepts him at his word. Jesus himself is central in Christian thinking. He is accepted as the Christian creed. In his person and work and teaching we find the highest expression of truth.

"He is the truth about God." "If ye had known me," he said, "ye would have known my Father also." The God in whom Christians believe is a Christlike God; he is God made manifest in Jesus Christ. In the person of Jesus and in his teachings we have the simplest, highest, and truest view of God ever given to the world. Where else can we go to learn about God? "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, show us the Father."

He is the truth about man. Jesus is religion's ideal man. In him we see the highest expression of the possibilities

of human life,—man as God intended and intends him to be. He is our pattern. Beholding him, we see our goal of character,—to become like him. But Jesus does more for us than provide a perfect pattern for us to imitate. We not only see in him what God desires man to be; in coming into vital relationship with him our spirits are renewed, our motives and purposes are vitalized, and we receive from him power to realize our ideals. "I am the life," he said. He both shows men the perfect pattern of life and enables them to realize it. He makes the ideal which he shows to men live in them. His revelation concerning man is dynamic. It is not so much a revelation in words as it is a mediation of life.

"I am the way," said Jesus. Discipleship to the first Christians meant living according to Jesus' way. They referred to the Christian life as "the Way." It is the way of approach to God. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me," he said. It is the way of service. "Whosoever would become great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all." Its motive is love. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." There is but one way to attain efficiency in Christ's service: by practice. The Sunday school must be a school of practice in living according to Jesus' way.

The gospels are central in the Sunday-school curriculum. All religious teaching reaches its highest point in the words of Jesus. The revelation through priests, prophets, sages, and apostles contained in the Bible attains its culmination in his teachings. It is here that we find the crowning element of revelation. Jesus and his words are the true norm of Christian teaching. This is the standard, and to this test we must bring all instruction offered for Sunday-school use. Whatever accords with his teaching, whatever passes

the test of comparison with the principles and ideals manifested in him, is to be received. Whatever fails to accord with, or contradicts his teaching, whatever is proposed as a part of Sunday-school instruction, from whatever source which cannot live in spiritual harmony with his character and his teaching, is to be frankly recognized as falling short. Is this not to take him at his own word? "Ye have heard that it hath been said, . . . but I say unto you" (Matt. 5. 43, 44).

The curriculum of the Sunday school finds its life-center in Christ, even as we as Christians find our life-center in him. The gospels, therefore, cannot rightly be regarded as merely one among many sources of lessons for the Sunday school; they should be regarded as a chief source. We cannot be true to our faith and give an equal amount of time to each of the books of the Bible; we must give major time to the study of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. As our faith is Christocentric, so must our Sunday schools be Christcentered.

Do we have in the gospels teaching material for the various grades? Do we find in them material for lessons for pupils of all departments? These are questions which this study undertakes to answer. Following four general studies on the subject matter of the gospels, we will consider the life of Christ in the light of the interests and needs of pupils of the different age periods.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DAILY STUDY

1. Consider the words of Jesus to Peter recorded in John 21. 15-17. Do you think Jesus had children in mind when he said, "Feed my lambs"?
2. Read 1 Cor. 3. 1-2. Note that Paul compared some of his teaching to "milk" and some to "meat"; also, that he recognized that "milk" was for babes and "meat" for men. Compare Hebrews 5. 12-14.

3. Study Matt. 18. 1-14. The disciples had been disputing as to who should be first or greatest. What was Jesus' answer? Is it pleasing to Jesus for us to make the interests of the child first in our study?

4. What was Jesus' view of the importance of his teaching? In seeking an answer to this question, study among other passages the following: Luke 21. 33; John 12. 48; Luke 21. 29-32; John 8. 51-56; Matt. 5. 43-45.

5. What did the apostles think concerning the importance of Jesus' teaching? Consider the significance of Peter's words, John 6. 68.

6. Consider the significance of the passages in Acts which speak of the Christian life as Jesus' way, or "The Way;" Acts 9. 1-12; 16. 17; 18. 25-26; 19. 9; 23. 4; 14. 22. (Note the reading in the American Revised Version.)

7. Consider the meaning and application of Jesus' statement in Matt. 23. 8.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND OBSERVATION

(Each member of the class should write a brief statement on the questions under this head. If the nature of the topics permits observation, include in the written statement such observations as there may be opportunity to make. Discuss the topics with others as opportunity affords. Give thought to each. Send the written statement to the teacher in advance of the next meeting, that he may have it before him in preparing his plan for teaching the lesson.)

These written statements represent the student's constructive work on the lesson, and are an important part of the lesson preparation. The purpose is: (1) to lead the student to formulate the results of his own thinking; (2) to direct his thoughts toward the topics of the next lesson; and (3) to aid the teacher or leader of the class to give each student the help he most needs.)

1. As a Sunday-school teacher have you found some lessons easier to teach than others? Why? Have some lessons seemed better adapted to the needs of your pupils than others?

2. What reasons of your own can you give for beginning the Teacher's Study of the Bible with a study of the Life and Teaching of Christ?

3. Make a list from memory of some of the outstanding events of the life of Christ.

LESSON II

THE LIFE OF CHRIST IN OUTLINE

The New Testament does not anywhere contain a biography of Jesus. All four of the gospels tell of the events of his public ministry, but no one of them attempts to supply a complete account of his life. However, we do find in them material from which an outline account of his life may be constructed. This requires a discriminating selection of material from each of the gospels, together with a comparison of statements and a rearrangement of their order of events. When this has been most carefully done there can be no certainty that the precise order in which the events occurred has been reproduced. Nor do we know the length of the public ministry. It is usually said to have been three years, but some scholars hold that it was much less. As the life of Jesus is made more vivid and real to us by a knowledge of the course of events, it is important that we perform this task of reconstructing as best we can a life of Christ in outline.

THE CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH OF JESUS

The infancy and early childhood. According to the accounts of both Matthew and Luke, Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King (Matt. 2. 1. Luke 1. 5; 2. 1-7). From fear of Herod, Joseph and Mary, under divine guidance, fled to Egypt, from whence they returned after Herod's death to their home in Nazareth of Galilee.

One brief statement (Luke 2. 40-52), contains the only information concerning the childhood of Jesus furnished by the gospels. Luke's statement is invaluable for its facts

and for its richness of suggestion. It pictures a normal, healthy boy, sound in body, of alert, eager mind, obedient and loyal to his earthly parents, beloved by them, and with the grace of God constantly upon him.

Youth. During his youth, Jesus worked at the handicraft of Joseph, who was a carpenter. Through diligent use of the opportunities of these years for study and training, and for the discipline of character, Jesus attained to that profound knowledge and wonderful understanding of the Old Testament, and to that perfection of character which were revealed early in his public ministry.

THE BEGINNINGS OF JESUS' MINISTRY

John, the Forerunner. The ministry of Jesus was preceded by that of John the Baptist, who came forth from the wilderness of Judea with a stern message of denunciation, warning, and demand for repentance.

The baptism and temptation. Jesus gave approval of John's work by presenting himself for baptism. At first John protested, but when Jesus declared that it was for him the fulfillment of righteousness he yielded and baptized him. Straightway the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus and he heard his call in the words, "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased." Luke says in a parenthesis that Jesus was at this time about thirty years of age (Luke 3. 23). The divine attestation brought with it a special and conscious enduement of power, which was followed immediately by the temptation (Matt. 4. 1-11).

The early ministry in Judea. We are dependent upon the fourth gospel for an account of certain opening events of Jesus' ministry. These include the calling of the first disciples in Judea and the first miracle in Galilee, a visit to Jerusalem; preaching and baptizing in Judea; and a return to Galilee by way of Samaria (John 1. 19-4. 42).

THE GALILEAN MINISTRY

Early ministry in Galilee and first opposition. Mark indicates that Jesus' ministry very early centered in Galilee. He made Capernaum his place of residence, taught in the synagogues, healed the sick, and preached to the multitudes. From this busy center he went forth at frequent intervals to the surrounding villages, occasionally making a preaching tour to the farther parts of Galilee. He attracted a multitude of followers, all classes of people being represented among them, even publicans and sinners. Some became his devoted disciples. Among these Levi (the apostle Matthew) is especially mentioned. Most of the Scribes and Pharisees were inclined to be captious, seeking to entangle him with questions. As he refused to acknowledge the "oral law," the teaching of the rabbis, as binding, they began openly to oppose him. Jesus would not bow to their influence, but on the contrary publicly condemned them for their prevalent hypocrisy. (See, for example, Mark 2. 23-28; 3. 1-6.)

Choice of the Twelve and the Sermon on the Mount. By this time the fame of Jesus had so spread beyond Galilee even to Idumea and beyond Jordan that a great multitude were attracted to him. From among those who had declared their allegiance he appointed twelve "that they might be with him and that he might send them forth to preach." To them and the whole company of his disciples he delivered what came to be known as the Sermon on the Mount, the "Great Charter" of the New Kingdom.

The ministry of evangelization throughout Galilee. The twelve were not sent out immediately, but accompanied Jesus as he went "through cities and villages preaching and bringing the good tidings of the Kingdom of God" (Luke 8. 1). Wherever people gathered together to hear, Jesus taught them. Sometimes it was a small company. When

opportunity offered he took the twelve apart by themselves that he might teach them. Especially when teaching the multitudes he used parables as a favorite form of teaching. This period witnessed some surpassing evidences of Jesus' power. The centurion's servant was healed at his word; the widow's son was raised at Nain; the tempest was stilled; Jairus' daughter was restored to life; a blind man was made to see, and a dumb man to speak (Luke 7. 1-17; 8. 22-25; 8. 40-56; Mark 8. 22-26; 9. 14-29).

The crisis in Galilee. As long as Jesus was comparatively unknown, the ruling parties among the Jews contented themselves with criticizing him on occasion and quietly using their influence against him. But now his widespread popularity threatened to undermine their power, or even to overthrow their leadership, and they became aggressively hostile. At this juncture, also, the fickleness of the populace was revealed. They wanted a leader who would use force, a Messiah who would organize revolt against Rome. On one occasion they attempted to make him their king (John 6. 15). Jesus would not accede to their demands. His kingdom, he declared, was to be established in the hearts of men. As the true import of his teaching became evident many turned away from him, including some of his professed disciples. In this hour of testing the twelve remained true. On a journey of retirement to Caesarea Philippi he asked them concerning their faith. Peter, as spokesman, declared their conviction: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16. 13-20). This was a great hour, both for the twelve and for the Master. His choice of them was vindicated. Gradually they had come to supreme faith in him, and in the hour of crisis their faith had stood the test.

The close of the Galilean ministry. The confession at Caesarea Philippi marked a turning point in Jesus' ministry.

Already Jesus had foreseen the inevitable result; now begins to prepare the minds of his disciples for his rejection by the ecclesiastical leaders. The disciples protested variously, but Jesus declared that they themselves must pass a similar test,—readiness to lose their lives for his sake. Soon after this first definite teaching concerning rejection the transfiguration occurred. The first three Gospels relate these three events and in the same order (Mark 9. 27 to 9. 13; Matt. 16. 13 to 17. 13; Luke 9. 18-36). Preparing the final departure from Galilee (Matt. 19. 1, 2), Jesus devoted himself primarily to teaching his disciples.

THE PEREAN MINISTRY

The lack of detailed information. Preceding the departure from Galilee there was an autumn journey to Jerusalem to the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7. 1-8, 50). John also records the presence of Jesus in Jerusalem at the Feast of Dedication (10. 22-42). Of the events of the intervening three months there is but scant information. It was probably about this time that the seventy were sent forth (Luke 10. 1-24). It is said that they were sent "two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself was about to come," but we have no detailed account either of their journeyings or of Jesus going after them.

Teaching in Perea. We are indebted chiefly to Luke for our knowledge of Jesus' ministry in Perea. Luke's account (9. 51-10. 14) concerns itself chiefly with Jesus' teaching. Among the few events recorded are the healing of a woman on the Sabbath (13. 20-21) and the healing of the ten lepers (17. 11-19). John's account of the raising of Lazarus falls within this period (John 11. 1-46). Included in the teaching of this period are certain discourses

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a number of parables, and also messages of warning addressed to the Pharisees.

The approach to Jerusalem. Throughout the Perean ministry Jesus' face was steadfastly set toward Jerusalem, although he well knew what would befall him there (Luke 9. 51). Luke's narrative bears evidence of the increasing opposition. Herod had formed a purpose to kill him (Luke 13. 31). The chief priests, Sadducees, joined hands with the Pharisees in plotting against him (John 11. 57). Approaching Jerusalem, at Bethany Jesus gratefully accepted from Mary an expression of self-sacrificing devotion as an anointing of his body for death.

THE PASSION WEEK

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The triumphal entry. Hearing that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, a great multitude went forth on the morning of the first day of the week to welcome him as the Messiah, the promised King. Purposely, Jesus planned to enter the city riding upon an ass as a public proclamation of Messiahship (Zech. 9. 9). That which he had long refrained from announcing he thus openly proclaimed. Now that he had by his deeds and his teachings made himself known, he thus offered himself to the people as the Christ. After going to the temple, receiving from his followers their joyful acclaim and from the children their songs of praise, Jesus quietly returned with the twelve to Bethany.

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Conflict with the Jewish rulers. Tuesday brought open conflict with the Jewish rulers. The cleansing of the temple was again an assertion of royal authority. Because of the multitude of those who were friendly to Jesus the leaders dared not publicly attempt his arrest. They challenged his authority, strove to entangle him with questions, and controverted his teaching, but he easily proved himself

superior to all of the forces that combined against him. Boldly he declared to Scribes, Pharisees, and priests that they were hypocrites who fought against God. His enmity was only intensified and they went forth to hasten secretly his destruction. Wednesday was apparently spent at Bethany in retirement with the disciples. On the evening of Thursday the Last Supper was celebrated. In connection with this sacred rite, Jesus spoke those farewell messages of instruction and consolation which have so richly comforted the sorrowing and oppressed of every age.

Arrest, trial and death. Late on Thursday night, through the perfidy of Judas, one of the twelve, Jesus was taken captive. He was delivered for trial, first to the Jewish Sanhedrin, then to Pilate, the Roman procurator of Judea. The charges against him were that he had blasphemed by claiming to be the Son of God and that he was a traitor to Rome because he had declared himself to be a king. Pilate inwardly desired to release Jesus, knowing that he was innocent of any wrong, but he was a coward and desisted to appease the multitude. Weakly protesting, he delivered him to the mob, consenting to his death. With fearful haste the unrighteous sentence was executed. Ere the sun had set on Friday the tragedy of the ages had been enacted and the broken body of the Son of Man lay cold in death within the rock-hewn tomb of Joseph.

The Resurrection. On the morning of the first day of the week, devoted women, coming early to the tomb, found the stone rolled away and the sepulcher empty. Jesus had risen from the dead.

THE FORTY DAYS

The Appearance after the Resurrection. On several occasions and under a variety of circumstances Jesus appeared to his disciples during a period of forty days following the

resurrection. Following the appearance to the women, Jesus appeared to two disciples on the way to Emmaus, to Simon, to the apostle on the evening of the day of resurrection, to Thomas with the other apostles, to seven disciples by the Sea of Galilee, to the eleven on a mountain in Galilee, and finally in Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives. Paul mentions an appearance of Jesus, and repeatedly refers to the risen Lord's appearance to himself. These appearances were seasons of brief fellowship in which Jesus sought to strengthen and spiritualize the faith of the disciples, to make clear that it behooved the Messiah to suffer and die, and to assure them of his continued presence with them in spirit.

The Ascension. Finally, from the summit of Olivet, after declaring that they should be his witnesses unto the uttermost parts of the earth, Jesus blessed his disciples and "was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight."

SUGGESTIONS FOR DAILY STUDY

(In connection with the study of the life and ministry of Jesus in outline, as presented in this chapter, we suggest the reading of the gospel of Luke as a whole.)

1. The Childhood and Faith of Jesus, 1. 5 to 2. 52.
2. The Beginning of Jesus' Ministry, 3. 1 to 4. 13.
3. The Galilean Ministry (to the choice of the twelve), 4. 14 to 6. 11.
4. The Galilean Ministry (concluded), 6. 12 to 9. 50.
5. The Perean Ministry, 9. 51 to 19. 28.
6. The Passion Week, 19. 29 to 23. 56.
7. The Forty Days, 24. 1-53.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND OBSERVATION

1. After your study of this chapter can you make an outline or chart of the life of Christ?
2. Has your own study in the Sunday school given you a vivid conception of Jesus' life and ministry? Explain your answer.
3. Which of the first three gospels means the most to you? Why?

LESSON III

THE FOURFOLD GOSPEL

The Christian gospel is one, but it is presented in fourfold form. It is the gospel according to Matthew, according to Mark, according to Luke, and according to John. As stated in our last chapter, none of the gospels is a biography of Jesus in the sense of supplying a complete history of his life. That there was a conscious omission of many particulars is shown by John's statement that he leaves unrecorded much more than he presents (John 21:25). The common purpose of all four writers was to present the good news that all might believe. Each, doubtless had in mind a particular constituency for whom he wrote; each interpreted the common purpose in his own way and made use of facts concerning the life of Jesus, common to all, as he possessed in common with other apostles, in such a manner as to contribute to the realization of his particular purpose. Says Godet: "Matthew groups together the doctrinal teachings in the form of great discourses. He is the preacher. Mark narrates the events as they occur to his mind. He is the chronicler. Luke reproduces the external and internal development of events. He is the historian, properly so called. John gives the inmost spirit and meaning of the facts which he relates. He is the philosopher and divine teacher. The result is that we have in the fourfold gospel a fuller and richer portrayal of the character and work of Jesus than would have been possible if the writers had purposely and merely to furnish a written history of his life.

The first three gospels have more in common with each other than the fourth.

another than any one of them has with the fourth gospel. The resemblance between Matthew, Mark and Luke is such that they may be said to present a common view of the life of Christ. For this reason they are called the Synoptic Gospels.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

Distinctive purpose and characteristics. Matthew begins his gospel, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." This indicates his purpose, namely, to demonstrate that Jesus is the true Messiah of the Jews. Most of the Jewish teachers and leaders had failed to see in Jesus the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Matthew undertakes to show that all prophecy is fulfilled in him. His characteristic statement is, "that it might be fulfilled." He has sixty-five quotations from the Old Testament, about three times as many as any other gospel writer. He gives little heed to chronological order of events in the life of Jesus, instead bringing together the material which he desires to use in a topical arrangement. He gives relatively more attention to the discourses of Jesus than do the other gospel writers, reporting five comparatively long discourses.

Outstanding contributions. Of all the gospels, Matthew most clearly presents Jesus as the Jewish Messiah, the consummate flower of the long course of Jewish religious development. Notwithstanding the fact that Jesus is a Hebrew of the Hebrews, he is shown to have boundless compassion upon outcasts and sinners, including both Jews and Gentiles. The warnings and rebukes addressed to the scribes and Pharisees give his teaching a note of authority and sternness heard in no other gospel. As the Messiah, Jesus is a king come to establish a kingdom. His kingdom, called by Matthew, alone, the kingdom of heaven, is

not national but universal. It is freed of all Jewish limitations and into it as a world kingdom all nations shall be gathered.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

Distinctive purpose and characteristics. "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." This opening sentence suggests that the author's intention is that of presenting a vivid word picture designed to show that Jesus is the Son of God. There is no argument and no apparent massing of evidence. The gospel is a plain, simple, direct, rapidly moving account of the public ministry of Jesus. The word "straightway" occurs more than forty times. The style is vivid, almost vivacious. Often the present tense prevails. There is no reference to the childhood or youth of Jesus. A few introductory sentences concerning John the Baptist lead to a matter of fact record of the baptism and temptation. This is followed immediately by the statement that Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of God. The remainder of the book is concerned almost wholly with an account of the Galilean ministry and the events of Passion Week. The fact that there is no genealogy, almost no quotations from the Old Testament, and no emphasis upon the fulfillment of prophecy, together with the fact that an explanation is offered of certain Jewish customs, names and terms, strongly suggest that the author is writing especially for Gentiles. He appears to be confident that just as the life of Jesus impressed those who knew it best, so a realistic portrayal of the deeds of Jesus will carry conviction to the hearts of those who read. The supreme argument for the divinity of Jesus is not to be phrased in words; it is to be seen in his life.

Outstanding contributions. The gospel of Mark is the gospel of action. It might well be entitled, "The Deeds

of Christ." Although many sayings and some discourses are presented, the deeds of Jesus constantly stand in the foreground. In it we have our most vivid, realistic picture of Jesus. Mark has a genius for exact description. In numerous instances he tells even Jesus' gestures or other bodily movements. (For example, see 7. 33, 34.) He supplies particulars of number, names, times, and place. The wealth of detail is such that although as a whole Mark's is the shortest of the gospels, not infrequently its account of events is longer than any of the parallel accounts. All the lines of the picture are clear cut and distinct, with a sharpness of impression which we find nowhere else. The power and strength of Jesus stand out in bold relief. One has suggested that the book might fittingly be called "the gospel of the strong Son of God." We gain also from Mark a realization of the impression which the words and deeds of Jesus made upon the people. Their "awe," "wonder," "fear," and "amazement" reflect the strength of Jesus' personality and the marvelous power manifest in his works.

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Distinctive purpose and characteristics. Luke states his purpose explicitly in his opening paragraph. (Read thoughtfully, 1. 1-4.) Many other narratives of the life of Jesus had been written. These have inspired him to write a historical, orderly account of the life of Jesus. He evidently did not think it necessary to the fulfillment of his purpose to write a complete biography. While it is addressed to an individual, Theophilus, it seems clear that the gospel is also intended for a wider circle, evidently Gentile Christians. The use of Hebrew is avoided and terms more intelligible to Gentiles replace Hebrew terms used in Matthew and Mark. Besides, there are a few distinctly Roman

touches which occur nowhere else, for example, the na the Roman emperor (3.1) and the taxing under Qui (2. 1).

Outstanding contributions. The lowly human origin of Jesus is shown in Luke's account of the nativity. He and the shepherds celebrate his birth and Joseph and Mary make for him the sacrifice of the poor (2. 24). As a man who knew poverty; he was without a home of his own and not where to lay his head. To Luke we are indebted for our portrayal of Jesus as the Great Physician who healed both the souls and the bodies of men. Of the six miracles which he alone records, five are miracles of healing. Luke joins with Matthew in emphasizing Jesus' ministry to outcasts and sinners. He has compassion for all men, but his sympathy is especially extended to the unfortunate, to the poor, and to the weak. He loves and cares for little children. Women have a place of marked prominence in Luke's narrative. The place of prayer in the life of our Lord is revealed in this gospel as in no other. Luke makes very prominent the human aspects of Jesus' life. The genealogy of the third chapter is traced back to Adam,—a declaration that Jesus is a member of the universal human family, and throughout the entire gospel his intimate fellowship with men is portrayed. But with equal clearness Luke asserts Jesus' divine character, calling him "Lord" more often than either Matthew or Mark. A remarkable summary of the distinctive features of Luke's gospel is given by Canon Farrar: "It is the gospel of the Greek and of the future of catholicity of mind; . . . of the universality and gratuitousness of salvation; the gospel of holy toleration; the gospel of those whom the religious world calls heretics; the gospel of the publican, and the outcast, and the weeping Magdalene, and the crucified malefactor, and of the Good Samaritan, and of the prodigal son."

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Distinctive purpose and characteristics. John states his purpose explicitly (Read 20. 31). This purpose is never for a moment lost sight of. Says Dods: "No composition in the whole compass of literature is a more perfect unity. Each word has its own place and helps out the plan. There is not a wasted clause, nor one without significance from the first word to the last." His plan involves the presentation of both the words and deeds of Jesus. The miracles are "signs;" their object to aid men to believe. Numerous conversations and discourses are reported. Witnesses give their testimony, both for and against Christ. The style is less epigrammatic than in the other gospels and more discursive and argumentative. A few characteristic words are used many times. Among these are "believe," "know," "life," "light," "glory," and "witness." Of all the disciples, John, in all probability, knew Jesus most intimately, loved him the most, and understood him the best. This gave him ability to penetrate beyond the outward events of the life of Jesus and to discern their spiritual significance. Thus the church was bequeathed in the fourth gospel a spiritual inheritance of inestimable worth. Of all the gospels it can least be called a biography of Jesus, but it is nevertheless one of the books we could least afford to be without.

Outstanding contributions. As the gospel of love, John's gospel is dearer to the hearts of the devoted followers of Jesus than any other. As the highest and truest revelation of the spirit of Jesus ever written it has a charm and power that are all its own. It gives us a view of Jesus which we get nowhere else. It supplements and completes the revelation of Christ given in the other gospels in a truly wonderful way. Said Origen, one of the early church fathers: "This gospel is the consummation of the gospels as the

gospels are of all the scriptures." In fulfilling his purpose John presents Jesus in his divine character, as a manifestation of the Most High. His theme might be stated to be the manifestation of God in Christ. Whereas Mark begins his account with John the Baptist, and Matthew traces Jesus back to Abraham, and Luke to Adam, John goes back into pre-existent eternity, to God who was "in the beginning," with whom was the Divine Word. Manifested in the flesh he dwelt among us. In presenting an account of his life, John keeps us constantly in the presence of the Divine Christ. The necessity of believing, in order to apprehend the supreme revelation of Jesus, is strongly emphasized. Although, strange to say, the word faith is not once used, belief and unbelief, faith and doubt, are pictured growing side by side, unbelief finally culminating in the cry of the Jews at the trial before Pilate, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him;" and faith culminating in Thomas' confession, "My Lord and my God." While there are many remarkable omissions in John's narrative, there are several conversations and discourses of Jesus, of paramount importance, not reported elsewhere. We are indebted to John, for example, for the conversation with the woman of Samaria (4. 4-26); for the discourses on the bread of life (6. 22-71); for that on the light of the world (8. 12-30); for that part of the farewell discourse contained in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters, and for the intercessory prayer (17. 1-26).

SUGGESTIONS FOR DAILY STUDY

1. Note the emphasis which Matthew places upon the kingship of Jesus and upon his kingdom. See Matt. 2. 2 (Cf. Luke 2. 11); 4. 17 (Cf. Luke 4. 16-19); 22. 2-14 (Cf. Luke 14. 16-24); 27. 11, 37. Find other references.
2. Read Matthew, chapters 5 to 13, noting the topical arrangement: chapters 5 to 7, the Sermon on the Mount; 8 to 9, miracles;

10. instructions to the twelve; 11 to 12, rebuke and warning to the Jewish people, especially their religious leaders and teachers; 13, a group of parables spoken at various times.

3. Read Mark, chapters 1 to 8. As you read make a note of passages which show: (a) the writer's genius for exact description; (b) his interest in particulars; (c) the impression Jesus made upon the people.

4. Read Mark, chapters 9 to 16. When you have finished, write down the characteristics of Jesus which stand out most prominently in your mind as the result of your reading.

5. Recall the portrait of Jesus as drawn by Luke. What characteristics seem to you to be most prominent in Luke's portrait of Jesus?

6. Read two or three chapters of John's gospel, of your own choosing. Note any differences which occur to you between the writer's style, or form of writing and that (a) of Mark, (b) of Luke.

Make a list of the "I am's" of Jesus in John's gospel, for example, "I that speak unto thee am he," 4. 26; "I am the bread of life," 6. 35, etc.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND OBSERVATION

1. Of what advantage to a teacher might it be to have a clear understanding of the distinctive purpose of each of the gospels.

2. In what ways has the gospel of John been of value to your religious life?

3. Before reading chapter 4 make a list of some of the most prominent subjects of Jesus' teaching.

LESSON IV

THE FORM AND CONTENT OF JESUS' TEACHING

As many as fifty times in the brief records which compose the gospels Jesus is addressed as teacher. As a teacher he began his ministry (Luke 4. 16-27) and as a teacher he ended it (Luke 24. 44-49). While he is spoken of as having preached to the people, a study of the gospels will show that his preaching was invariably in the form of a teaching discourse. We speak of the Sermon on the Mount, and Matthew's record is, "And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying . . ." (Matt. 5. 2). The evangelists regard teaching as his regular custom; for example, Mark says "As he was wont, he taught them" (Mark 10. 1), and John quotes him as saying, "I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple . . ." (John 18. 20).

Consider, also, the importance which Jesus attached to his teaching. Ponder the implications of John 15. 3; 6. 68. 51; Matthew 8. 24-27. Remember that Jesus made keeping his words a test of our love for him (John 14. 23). Recall the encomium which Jesus passed upon Mary who "sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his words" (Luke 10. 39) declaring that she had chosen the good part which should not be taken away from her.

THE FORM OF JESUS' TEACHING

How did Jesus present his teaching? Could he be likened to a modern preacher preaching on subjects announced beforehand or to a professor teaching courses on given subjects? Did not practically all of Jesus' teaching grow out of actual situations in the lives of those whom he taught? Consider, for example, how he came to speak of the water

of life and of worship in spirit to the woman of Samaria (John 4. 5-26). Was this not a typical incident in his teaching?

The teaching of Jesus was not presented in systematic form. There is very little in common between the form of Jesus' teaching and a modern volume of systematic theology. Jesus apparently made absolutely no effort to shape his teaching into a system of doctrine, nor can we properly speak of it as a body of doctrine. It grew out of life and it presents a way of life. Bishop McDowell, who speaks of Jesus as "the least academic and the most vital of all teachers," says: "His teaching is not a body of divinity, nor a code of rules for every emergency, nor a series of detached, unrelated sayings. It is a body of truth upon which life rests and out of which life grows; a set of principles which do not act as substitutes for thought, but which make thinking fruitful and not barren; . . . and all of the kind to which life in every age responds as true."¹

The clear, incisive, familiar, picturesque style of his teaching is to be especially noted. How simple, yet how pointed and impressive are many of his sayings! "Many are called but few are chosen" (Matt. 21. 14); "I came not to destroy but to fulfill" (Matt. 5. 17); "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 14. 11); "The sabbath was made for man and not man for the sabbath" (Mark 2. 27). There was nothing far-fetched or abstract about his teaching. It was close to life, full of pictures, pointed by references to the most common of objects.

Jesus was perfectly free and informal in his manner of teaching. "His method," says Stevens, "was strikingly simple, spontaneous and free." Sometimes he sat in the midst of a group of his disciples and talked with them;

¹ In the School of Christ, page 50.

sometimes he stood while speaking. He taught in the synagogues and in the temple, on the mountain, while walking through the fields, and once, at least, when the people thronged him he entered into a boat and taught the people who stood or sat on the shore.

The outward form of Jesus' teaching varied with different occasions. Very much of his teaching was conversational. Recall how many of the priceless statements of truth which the world will never let die were spoken in informal conversation with one person. He seems to have preferred dealing at close range to addressing crowds. In these personal interviews he made much use of *direct questioning*. With wonderful tact and skill he drew from the one with whom he talked expressions of spiritual need, confession of moral shortcomings, the very truth he desired to apply and finally a profession of personal adherence. As a striking example study John 4. 5-42. In his conversation Jesus also made frequent use of *brief, sententious sayings*. In this respect his teaching bears resemblance to the Wisdom literature of the Old Testament, especially Proverbs. Examples may be found in Matt. 6. 21; 7. 1; 26. 41; Acts 20. 35.

The *parable* was a principal form of Jesus' teaching. By some students it has been styled the most characteristic form of his teaching. It was not a new form, for the writings of the rabbis abound with parables, but in the teaching of Jesus they attained their most significant use and their perfected form. Jesus' purpose in using parables he explained to his disciples. Consult Mark 4. 11-12; Matt. 13. 10-15; Luke 8. 9-10.

THE CONTENT OF JESUS' TEACHING

Is it possible to systematize and to summarize the teaching of Jesus? The form and characteristics of his teaching as we have briefly and imperfectly presented them

must show how impossible such an undertaking is. Nor would it be desirable to do so, even if it were entirely possible. But it is wholly desirable to study the teaching of Jesus upon particular subjects. What were some of the principal subjects of Jesus' teaching?

The heavenly Father. In a few instances God is spoken of in the Old Testament as Father, but Jesus habitually called God by this name. The term, as he used it, had a meaning and content before unknown. "Jesus came," says Phillips Brooks, "to restore the fact of God's Fatherhood to man's knowledge and to its central place of power over man's life." The Father is a God of love, full of mercy and compassion for his children. This truth Jesus strongly emphasized, making it a central element in the gospel. God is the Father, not of one race, but of all men. His love and his fatherly care are extended not alone to the deserving, but to the unthankful and the wicked. He graciously forgives all who repent and accept the mediation of his Son. He hears the cry of the penitent, and answers all who call upon him. For his faithful and obedient children in the Gospel, he has reserved in Heaven an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled. Jesus spoke of God also as a King. He emphasized his majesty and his glory, and likewise his attributes of justice and perfect righteousness. God is the judge of all and his condemnation of evil doers and all workers of iniquity is stern and unsparing. Among other passages these will be found to be important. Matt. 5. 16, 43-48; 6. 1-18, 26-34; 7. 7-12; Luke 15; 18. 1-8; 12. 32.

The Kingdom of God. In beginning his ministry Jesus announced, "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand," and so large a place did it have in his teaching that the evangelists describe his message as the "gospel of the kingdom." The kingdom, Jesus declared, is divine in

origin. It is the rule of God in and through the hearts and lives of men. While it is an inner kingdom it has its outward aspects. It is a body of people who, because they have made the will of God supreme, possess certain qualities of mind and heart and live together as children of the Father and brothers in a family. It is a kingdom of righteousness, and of right relations among men. It is not to be identified with any existing society or temporal rule. Neither nationality nor outward condition counts for membership; its members are born of the Spirit. It is already present among men, but in the future it is to come with power. Though it may seem small and insignificant now, it will grow and increase until it fills the whole earth. Though it cometh not with observation it will ultimately transform human society. Consider, as among the principal references on the subject: Mark 1. 15; Matt. 5. 3-13; 7. 12; Luke 17. 20, 21; Matt. 20. 26, 27; Mark 4. 26-29; John 3. 1-17.

Of this kingdom Jesus proclaimed himself to be the Messiah, the promised King.

Man. Prominent in Jesus' teaching is his appreciation of the inherent worth of man. This finds expression both in his estimate of human nature and in his valuation of individual men. The soul is beyond all price, of so great value as not to be possible of measurement by material standards. The man farthest lost to righteousness is infinitely precious in the sight of God. The Son of man came to seek and save the lost. No man is so far gone as to be irretrievably lost. In the worst of men the divine spark still burns. The supreme thing in life is to realize one's inheritance as a son of God through faith in Jesus Christ and to come into vital, filial relationship with the Father.

Jesus declared the sum of human duty to be expressed in the command to love God with the whole heart and one's neighbor as oneself. Love is the fulfilling of the law. So

ship to God is to be realized in the life of love. By love Jesus meant not a passive virtue but, as Stevens says, "an energetic power which sets all the faculties of the soul in vigorous operation." The following passages are especially to be noted: Luke 9. 25; Matt. 10. 31; 12. 12; Luke 10. 1-10.

Sin. Jesus had little to say concerning sin in the abstract or concerning the origin of sin. But of the sins of men and of men as sinful and sinning, he had a great deal to say. He deals with sin concretely. He points to specific things and declares them wrong. He traces sins to their source in the will and in the evil heart. From within, out of the heart of men, sins proceed. The evil word, the wicked act, point within. Men will be justified or condemned because of what they are in their inner lives. Sins are punished both in this life and that which is to come. The punishment involves the loss of a glorious heritage and also positive suffering.

Certain sins are singled out for specific condemnation by Jesus. These are of three principal classes: Sins of the flesh and the sensual mind, as fornication, lasciviousness, adultery; sins growing out of an evil attitude toward other men such as thefts, covetousness, hatred, retaliation and resentment, refusal to forgive; sins connected with a wrong attitude toward truth and toward God, as untruthfulness, utterance of evil or empty words, refusal to accept the truth, hypocrisy, ingratitude, self-exaltation, blasphemy.

Jesus strenuously exhorted men to turn away from sin. He urged men to repent, an act which involves intellect, emotion, and will,—a change in the attitude of the heart, an abandonment of the evil purpose, turning the back on evil and setting the face toward the good. Study the following passages: Matt. 5. 21, 22, 27, 28; 7. 17-20; 12. 33-37; Mark 7. 20-23; 9. 43-48.

Deliverance. Jesus clearly stated the conditions of deliverance from sin. They are repentance, and faith in and in God. Repentance brings forgiveness, faith rewarded by the gift of life. If the sinner renounces and forsakes his sin, God forgives; that is, he reestablishes filial relation, takes the repentant one into fellowship with himself. Faith, in the teaching of Jesus, like love, is passive, but active. It manifests itself in conduct.

In the gospels a saving significance is attached to the entire ministry of Jesus. His words have a saving efficacy. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life," he declared. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my sayings, he shall never see death" (John 51). He invited men to receive him as Lord and Savior. His example and influence, he, himself, would save men. "Come unto me . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matt. 11. 28). Finally, a special meaning and value attached to his death. Sacrifice, he declared, was a fundamental law of the kingdom. Those who would be his disciples must be prepared to suffer for his sake. He, himself, was not exempt from this law. He could not be loyal to the truth he proclaimed, and to his mission as given him by the Father, and escape the cross.

In the presence of the cross we confront the mystery of the ages,—a mystery whose depth the human mind is unable to fathom. The types and figures by which theologians seek to explain it are all inadequate. From Jesus we learn that it was the Father's will that he should die thus; in his death we behold the innocent suffering for the guilty, we see God sharing the pangs of a world in travail. Moreover, his death assures us that through his death men are to be saved; his blood is shed for us; it is the blood of a new covenant, shed for many unto the remission of sins. Among other references, these should be thoughtfully studied: Mark 1. 17;

14; 1. 15; Matt. 11. 5, 28; 8. 31; Mark 8. 33 35; 10. 42-45;
14. 24; Matt. 26. 28.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DAILY STUDY

(Numerous references for a study of the form and content of Jesus' teaching are given above. The following suggestions are concerned with a study of the method of Jesus as a teacher.)

1. Note how Jesus made use of a common, apparently casual circumstance as a starting point to lead a soul into the truth and into right relations with God. John 4. 5-26.

2. Note how Jesus used Scripture in repelling temptation, Matt. 4. 1-11. Find examples showing his use of Scripture in teaching.

3. Compare the Beatitudes (Matt. 5. 3-12), as to form, with the Decalogue (Exod. 20. 1-17). What is the difference? Was Jesus' teaching usually positive or negative in form? Do you find any examples of the negative form?

4. Note the appeal of Jesus to the will, as in Luke 9. 23. Find other examples. Would you say that he placed primary emphasis upon understanding, or upon feeling, or upon doing?

5. Study Jesus' use of questions in teaching. As a typical example take Luke 10. 25-37. Note how through skillful questioning he leads the lawyer to answer his own question.

6. Consider Jesus' use of the concrete in teaching, for example, Matt. 18. 1-3. To what extent may this be said to be typical of Jesus' method of teaching?

7. What instances can you find of Jesus making use of personal interviews in teaching? Did he do this frequently?

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND OBSERVATION

1. Would you say that Jesus was "a great scholar"? Why, then, is he known as the Master Teacher?

2. Compare Jesus as a teacher with any great modern teacher. For example, a modern teacher is connected with a school or college; Jesus was connected with no school, etc.

3. What do you think is the central element in the Christian religion?

LESSON V

THE PERSONALITY OF JESUS

In our last lesson we thought of Christ in terms of work as a teacher. Since of all teachers Jesus is easily first, his teaching is of paramount importance. But the fact of greatest importance in any study of Christ is not his teaching but himself. His character and personality worth more than his spoken words. The partial record of his sayings furnished by the evangelists is a priceless contribution. In itself it makes the world their debtor for all time. The gospel contained in the New Testament is above and beyond all else the gospel of a divine Person. Its supreme contribution to religion is the personality of the historical Jesus. The revelation of God to the world could not be made by words alone; for its complete expression, one that would make clear its nature, its purpose, and its full significance, a personality was required. The supreme revelation of God to the world is in the person of Jesus Christ.

THE DEFINITION OF HIS PERSONALITY

How shall we define the personality of Christ? The terms we use in speaking of him,—Christ, the Son of God, the son of man, the Saviour—are attempts at definition. The early church used still other names and descriptive phrases in speaking of him. They said he was the express image of God's person, the uttered reason of God, the outshining of the divine majesty, very God of very God. Originally each of these terms was an attempt of some disciple to express in words what Jesus had come to mean to him in his personal experience. No one of these terms in its

nor all of them taken together are sufficient to express the full significance of Jesus. He transcends by far all attempts at definition; his character surpasses all estimate. How then can anyone estimate the personality of Jesus for another?

How did the disciples come to their estimate of Jesus? Was it given to them in the words of another or did it come to them as a revelation,—a process of discovery as they lived with him? Before attempting to answer this question meditate on Matt. 16. 13-17. Must not every really vital estimate of Jesus come chiefly in this way? Says Charles E. Jefferson, "There are some things that cannot be told. I cannot tell a man beauty; a man must see beauty for himself. I cannot tell a man music; he must hear it for himself. I cannot tell a man love; he must love before he knows what love is. Neither can I tell any man the deity of Jesus. Every man must find that out for himself."¹

What is here set forth in brief, simple statement is designed only to give suggestive aid in that which must be chiefly a discovery that will come from loving, loyal, open minded discipleship.

Among the things which it is important to take into account are:

The unique filial relationship of Jesus to God. This is implied in his acceptance of the title of Messiah and in the many passages in which he refers to God as "my Father" (for example, Matt. 7. 21). It is directly asserted in the application to himself of the titles, the Son (Luke 10. 22; Mark 13. 32) and the Son of God (John 5. 25; 10. 36; 11. 4), and in those statements which declare his oneness with God (John 10. 30; 17. 21). As we study the gospels we are impelled to the conclusion that Jesus possessed a consciousness of perfect union with God, of

¹ Things Fundamental, page 130.

ability to reveal God to men and to accurately portray men the character of God.

The unique moral consciousness of Jesus. He asserted his consciousness of unbroken moral fellowship with God. Read, as one statement of this, John 8. 29. In its negative aspect, this means that Jesus was without sin, but it signifies vastly more than this; nothing less, in fact, than that in Jesus the perfect, ideal moral character is to be seen. In contemplating his character, men of every generation have been led to exclaim with Renan, "Whatever the surprises of history, Jesus will never be surpassed."

Jesus' consciousness of pre-eminent authority. He claimed the attestation of no human institution, possessed no credentials from neither church nor state, yet he asserted a degree of authority such as no man had ever claimed before—authority to annul the sacred law of the Jews (Matt. 23-28; Matt. 5. 31, 32, 38, 39); to forgive sins, an authority which he vindicated by his deeds of power (Matt. 2. 5-12); and to execute divine judgment (John 5. 22-23). "Authority," says a recent writer, "is bound up with personality and is a vital expression of it." The authority of Jesus stands this test. It was not something external but was rather in and of himself. In this connection consider the significance of the statement in Matt. 7. 28, 29.

Jesus' possession of unique power. Evidence of his power appears on almost every page of the gospels. On many occasions he exercised a control over the forces of nature. He had a power to heal and restore body and mind such as caused those who beheld to acclaim his acts as "signs" and "wonders." The miracles of Jesus, without question, had an important place in attesting his divine power and authority to the men of his own day. As Myers has said, "If the gospel signs and wonders are considered as indications of laws which embrace, and in a sense unite, the seen and

unseen worlds, then surely it is of immense importance to science that they should occur anywhere, and of immense importance to Christianity that they should occur in connection with the foundation of that faith." ¹

The final transcendent evidence of the unique power of Jesus was afforded when his personality showed itself mightier than death. To Paul, this crowning miracle of Jesus' earthly career was the cornerstone of the Christian faith (Corinthians 15. 14). For us, as for him, by his resurrection Jesus brought life and immortality to light.

CHRISTIANITY A PERSONAL RELIGION

What were some of the invitations of Jesus in calling men to discipleship? Read Luke 5. 27; John 1, 43; Matt. 11. 28-30. Can you give other examples? Note that these invitations are in personal terms.

Jesus is a living Saviour, a reigning Lord. The recorded utterances of Jesus come to us out of the past, but Jesus himself lives and reigns in the hearts of men as Lord and Saviour. He is a living presence, an influence, an inspiration, a power, in the lives of countless men of our own day. He enters into our human lives in such intimate relations that such a man as Horace Bushnell is enabled to say, "I know Jesus Christ better, far better, than I know any man in Hartford."

The living Christ gives power to the written word. "It is the living Christ who keeps the doctrine of Christ a living doctrine, his truth a living truth. 'The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life,' but they are spirit and life not alone because they are correct words but also because he is evermore in them." ²

Christianity is a personal religion. In Christ's name,

¹ Essays: Modern, page 223.

² In the School of Christ, McDowell, page 106.

after nineteen centuries we still repeat the invitation: "Follow *me*," "Come unto *me*," "Believe on *me*." We recognize that the central element in Christianity is the personal relation between the disciple and Christ. The teaching of Jesus apart from personal relation to Jesus may be illuminating and inspiring, but it is not giving. We may indeed receive into our minds as information all that the gospels contain and be but little helped off either morally or religiously. It is when our hearts are open to the influence of Christ and our wills are conformed to his will that his words become dynamic, a savor of life unto life.

THE TEACHER'S PROBLEM

What was the supreme element in Jesus' training of the Twelve? What was the greatest thing he did for them? Read Mark 3. 13, 14, and endeavor to answer these questions in the light of this statement. Consider especially the significance of the words, "And he ordained twelve *that they should be with him . . .*"

In all teaching the supreme force is personality. More potent by far than words is the power of a great personality. The richest personality ever in the world is that of Jesus Christ. In view of this, what is the chief problem of the teacher of religion? It is surely this: how to bring the pupil into contact with Christ, how to bring the personality of Christ to bear upon the pupil. How can we cause it to be brought about that our pupils of all ages shall see him and come to know him, and that his personality may make its impression upon their minds and hearts that Christ shall be formed in them? For this is our chief concern for them, as Bushnell says, that they shall be "Christ all through, filled in every fiber and member with Christly manifestation, in that manner to be so interwoven

with him as to cross fiber and to feel throughout the quickening contact of his personality."

The problem of how this can be most effectively accomplished is that with which our remaining lessons will deal. It is a problem which must be considered in the light of the dominant interests and needs of the successive periods of the life of the pupil. To the extent that we succeed in our effort to find a right solution we shall blaze a clear path for the Christian nurture of our pupils.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DAILY STUDY

(In connection with the study of the personality of Jesus as presented in this chapter, we suggest the consideration of some chief aspects of his character.)

1. Consider the love of Jesus. Meditate on these passages: John 15. 9-15; 13. 1-5; Luke 22. 14, 15; John 13. 23, 31, 35.

2. Consider the magnanimity of Jesus. Among other passages think of these: Mark 2. 15-17; John 4. 5-10; Matt. 26. 50; Luke 23. 33, 34.

3. Consider the indignation of Jesus. Ponder these statements: Matt. 23. 23-38; Mark 8. 31-33; John 2. 13-17.

4. Consider the prayerfulness of Jesus. Meditate on these passages: Mark 1. 32-35; 6. 45, 46; Luke 6. 12; 9. 28, 29; Mark 14. 32-36.

5. Consider the joy of Jesus. Think on these verses: John 15. 11; 17. 13; 16. 33; Matt. 9. 10-15; 25. 21-23.

6. Consider the sublime confidence of Jesus as indicated in these verses: Matt. 13. 31-33; Mark 14. 9; 14. 22-25.

7. Consider the loyalty of Jesus to the Father's will. Study these passages: Matt. 12. 47; Luke 22. 39-44; John 4. 31-34; 5. 30; 6. 38.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND OBSERVATION

1. Have you as a teacher so studied the gospels as to allow the personality of Jesus to make its full impression upon your mind and heart?

2. Have you fully considered how important it is that your personality as a teacher should reflect the personality of Jesus?

3. Before studying chapter 6, ask yourself why the gospels should be used in teaching little children.

LESSON VI

LITTLE CHILDREN AND THE LIFE OF CHRIST

Why should we use the gospels in teaching little children? Can we assume that they are valuable for little children because as adults we have found them of supreme worth? In the days when children were commonly thought of as diminutive men and women such an assumption might have passed unchallenged, but not so today. We now clearly understand that the religious needs of little children are very different from those of mature men and women. We also know that it is quite as impossible to compel a child's mind to learn what is unsuited to his capacity as to compel his physical system to assimilate unsuitable food. For these reasons we may not pass from a study of the gospels to their use as the source of lessons for pupils of all grades. We must be sure that we understand the needs of pupils of each age and then we must reexamine the gospels in the light of these needs.

LESSONS FOR LITTLE CHILDREN

The characteristics and needs of Beginners and Primary children have been studied. Are the most important of these needs clearly before our minds? What are some of the requirements concerning lessons grow out of the religious needs of children in these periods? Let us call to mind some elementary principles.

The lesson should be presented in story form. For both the Beginner and the Primary pupil it holds absolutely true.

"Truth in closest words shall fail
Where truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors."

The truth which the story presents should be within the range of the child's understanding. His range of understanding of abstract ideas is very limited. Most of the theological ideas cherished by adults are entirely meaningless to the little child. Weaving them into a story does not help in the least in making them understandable. Since a primary purpose of the story is the message which it carries to the mind and heart, it is not enough to present the lesson in story form; the content of the story must be suitable for the mind of the child.

The situation which the story presents should be within the range of the child's experience. The situation pictured should be within the little child's world. It should be such a situation as he can fit himself into and it should offer something that he can take to himself, and make a part of his own life. If it is to help him, he must be able to live the story over again as he thinks of it.

The story should be told in such a way as to awaken a response. Even less with little children than with adults can we assume that mere telling is teaching. The response of the child determines the value of the story and there is no other test. A teacher of whom Miss Danielson tells had satisfying evidence that her use of the story "Jesus Loving Little Children" was effective. In closing the story she said, "We cannot put our arms about Jesus' neck or feel his hand upon our heads, as those long ago children did, but we can speak to him and we will now." At that moment a little girl suggested softly, "We might make believe put our arms round his neck while we do."

Stories should be arranged in topical order. Little children have no measure of time and very little realization of orderly sequence of events. A chronological order has therefore no significance for them. Because they desire to hear the same story over and over, and because a truth

must be repeatedly expressed if it is to make a permanent impression, there is particular significance in the arrangement of stories under general topics, and it is important that this order should be followed.

THE SPECIAL ADAPTABILITY OF STORIES FROM THE OF CHRIST

Having ascertained some of the elemental requirements concerning the form of the lesson and the manner of presentation we are now ready to consider its content. Here we are not to think of all possible lesson material. The problem is less general since we limit ourselves in this course to a study of the life of Christ. How do stories from the life of Christ help the little child to live his life aright? What needs of little children are they adapted in an especial way to satisfy?

Stories from the gospels give little children right ideas of God. Our study of Beginners and Primary children doubtless impressed us with their need to know of the loving and protecting care, and benevolent power of God. The knowledge of God is not strange or alien to the mind of the child. Have you never noticed that the little child's thoughts of God often are grotesque? Can you give examples of crude ideas of God expressed by little children? How can we aid little children in getting right ideas of God? Will anything mean anything to them to tell them that God is a Spirit? Is a little child capable of conceiving of God as a Spirit? As the little child must think of God in terms of a human being is it not highly important that we should lead him to have right conceptions of the nature and being of God? In telling him stories of Jesus, the Son of God? Our highest and truest conceptions of the nature and purposes of God come from the life and teaching of Jesus. From the same source we secure lessons best adapted to meet this need.

a permanent little children. We want the little child to think of God as Father and of himself as God's child. Stories of the Child Jesus, God's Son, meet this need as no other stories can possibly meet it.

Stories which tell of the love of Jesus awaken an answering love in the little child's heart. Never will the human being be more responsive to love than during these years. If we may succeed in interpreting the love of God to the heart of the little child we may be perfectly sure that he will respond and that an answering love will spring up in his own soul. How can we best interpret the love of God to the little child? This is a question which as teachers of little children we are called upon to ponder. It must be very evident that we cannot do it by any process of reasoning. Perhaps we will be helped in answering the question by asking how we assure our own hearts of the love of God when dark doubts of God's providence crowd in upon us. Do we not invariably fall back upon the assurance which comes from the life of Jesus Christ? "God is like Christ," we say, "and Christ loved men. He showed his love in ways we cannot dispute. We cannot possibly stand against the evidence which comes to us from his life." Jesus' deeds of compassion and love are as plain in their meaning to little children as to adults. So in teaching them we may tell them about Jesus. We may give them stories showing his love. Then we may say, "Jesus was God's Son. God is like Jesus. God the Father loves us even as Jesus loves us." To this the heart of the child will respond, "I love God. He is my Father, too, isn't he?"

Stories of the protecting care of Jesus help to satisfy the child's hunger for protection and awaken the feeling of trust and their desire to be helpful. The child's dependence causes his whole nature to cry out for care and protection. His response to the one who provides for this need is im-

mediate and lasting. Stories which tell of the power of Jesus to give care and protection cannot fail to arouse a feeling of trust in the heart of the little child and the foundation for a life of Christian faith is laid. Appreciation of care is naturally accompanied by the feeling of gratitude and this may be nurtured through encouragement to expression in songs, words and deeds. Other stories which tell of the gratitude of those for whom Jesus cared will aid such expression. Stories should also be told which show how people and, as far as possible, little children helped Jesus in giving care. The suggestion that the children themselves can be of help to Jesus will come naturally to the children to whom the stories are told, and if opportunities be offered they will readily learn ways of usefulness.

Stories from the gospels inculcate moral ideals suitable for little children need. How shall we teach the little child to be kind? In what way can the little child be taught obedience? In what way can ideals of right conduct be most effectively presented to him? If the little child is told of a child who was kind, or of a man whom he saw who did a kind deed to someone in need, his certain impulse will be to do a similar act of kindness. Some of the happiest experiences of Beginners' teachers have come when in the use of the Beginners' Graded Lessons the story of Jesus Caring for a Sick Boy, or that of Jesus Healing the Blind Man, has been told and some little boy or girl who previously unresponsive has said: "James is sick. Can we do something for him?" Or "I know a blind man who lives on our street. I would like to do something for him." It is such experiences as these which prove to the Beginner or Primary teacher that she is really *teaching*. An abundance of material for teaching moral ideals is to be found in the gospels.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST FOR CHILDREN

Should an attempt be made to present the whole story of the life of Christ to little children? Our discussion has concerned selected stories from the gospels. Should something more be offered? Many persons have written lives of Christ for children, attempting to present the entire contents of the gospels. What shall be said concerning these?

All of the contents of the gospels are not for children. It is to be recognized that the gospels were addressed to adults and much of the material in them can be effectively used only in teaching seniors and adults. *Advanced theological ideas are of no present value to a little child.* They are entirely without the range of the little child's understanding. It avails nothing to take an abstract theological idea expressed in difficult terms and state it in words of one syllable. The words of a book are not eaten by the child. The entire situation must be within the range of his experience if it is to be seized upon and utilized by his mind. The idea must be such as will kindle imagination, appeal to feeling, and instruct the intellect. If the ideas expressed mean nothing to his mind the fact that they are clothed in simple words will not aid in the least.

Chronological order is of no significance to a little child. "Yesterday" and "tomorrow" are alike to him. He does not remember the order in which events occur. Chronological arrangement is, therefore, for the little child arbitrary and meaningless.

For these reasons we are not to try to teach the life of Christ as such to little children. That will come later. For pupils of Beginners' and Primary age *we will select general topics or themes under each of which may be grouped a number of stories teaching the same or similar truths.* The basis of selection in every case will be the needs of the children for whom the stories are selected.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DAILY STUDY

1. Read Luke 2. 1-20, 22-39. Think of these passages as stories to be told to little children. What purposes would they fulfill in their lives?

2. Study the incident recorded in Mark 10. 13-16. Write the story as you would tell it to a group of Beginners. Compare Story 23, International Graded Lessons, Beginners' Series, Year. Would this story tend to awaken love for Jesus in the heart of a little child?

3. Read Matt. 21. 6-11, 14-16. Do you see in the description of the children's praise the suggestion of a story of their love for Jesus and their desire to do something for him? What results would you expect from little children?

4. Read Mark 4. 35-41. How would you tell the story of this incident in order to emphasize the protecting care of Jesus? What service would this render to the little child?

5. Read Mark 10. 46-52. Read the story as it is told in Mark 10. 46-52. Read the story as it is told in Mark 10. 46-52. Read the story as it is told in Mark 10. 46-52. Do you think this story is fitted to realize the aim for which it was told?

6. Consider how you would tell the story of the incident recorded in Matt. 14. 15-21 to a class of primary children. What would be your purpose in telling the story?

7. Study Luke 17. 11-19 as a story to be told to primary children. With what different purposes could this story be told?

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND OBSERVATION

1. Do the gospels have as large a place as should be given to them in teaching little children?

2. Can you recall your childhood's Sunday school experience? In what ways were you helped most by stories from the life of Christ?

3. What are some of the principal needs of Juniors which should be met by lessons?

LESSON VII

JUNIORS AND THE LIFE OF CHRIST

We now come to consider the life of Christ in the light of the religious needs of children of nine to eleven or twelve. Our problem demands of us an acquaintance with children of this age. How well do we know Junior boys and girls? To what extent are their interests familiar to us? Can we state the principal religious needs of Juniors which we may hope to supply by means of instruction? What kind of lessons will most effectively meet these needs?

Our present task is not to review all possible lesson material, but rather to consider the special adaptability of the life of Christ.

THE SPECIAL ADAPTABILITY OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST

In what ways is the life of Christ especially adapted to meet the needs of Juniors?

The life of Christ is a record of heroic action. Jesus lived an intensely active life. We may well question whether another life has ever been lived into which so much and such varied action was crowded in so brief a space of time. And in it all the element of moral heroism was predominant. On every page of the gospels there is action of such moral quality that neither comment nor interpretation is needed to make it evident. The action appeals to the interests of Juniors and the moral values implicit in the deeds of Jesus make deeper impression upon them than any amount of abstract teaching.

The life of Christ represents personified power. There is no limit to the power of Jesus as his life and work are

portrayed in the gospels. The forces of nature obey his bidding. The winds and the waves obey him; at his word the storm becomes a calm; he heals the sick and calls the dead to live. To him there are no impossible tasks. His power is beyond the comprehension of the wisest. Men and women of his own day were astonished beyond measure at its manifestations; men of all time have marveled at the minds of boys and girls of Junior age are filled with wonder by it. They are always impressed by manifestations of power. Before the limitless power of Jesus they bow in reverent awe and worship.

Jesus represents in himself an authority which appeals to the Junior. The recognition of the authority of Jesus stands out prominently upon the pages of the gospels. We see in him an authority such as appears in no one else. It is not an authority which announced itself or which relied on external means for its enforcement. It is an authority which inheres in power and truth and nobility of character. While it is seen in some measure in other men its supreme manifestation is in the divine man, Jesus Christ. Before this authority the Junior instinctively realizes. It appeals to him and he readily bows down to it.

The obedience of Jesus to his Father's will is an example of the highest value to the Junior. A supreme element in the life of Jesus was his purpose to do the Father's will. Again and again this appears as a determining factor in a course of action. He not merely consented to do the Father's will, he was eager to do it, and he did it with the cost was sacrifice, pain, death. This is of utmost significance in teaching Juniors. These are the years in which obedience must be finally learned. Just ahead of them are the new years of independence, individual freedom, personal initiative. An example of obedience, and more, a life story which places the stamp of heroism upon

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The life of Christ offers to the Junior a leader whom he may follow. The gospel picture reveals Jesus as a leader. Men willingly and readily followed him. He was at the head of a group or band of disciples who went with him, heeded his words, did his bidding. This picture impresses the Junior. When he learns that Jesus is to-day a living leader, and that he invites all who will to follow him, he too is ready to hear and heed.

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The moral and religious example of Jesus is of the largest value to Juniors. The special moral problems of this period have chiefly to do with the building up of right habits and the development of right attitudes. What are some habits Juniors should form? One of the most important, it will be agreed, is the habit of prayer. How can this habit be established? The example of Jesus will be found to be a potent influence here. What can Junior boys and girls do in the way of service to others? How can they be stimulated to do these things? In this also the example of Jesus will be found to be exceedingly influential.

FORM OF PRESENTATION

Our study of the gospels has acquainted us with the purpose of each of the evangelists. No one of them, it will be agreed, wrote especially for children of Junior age. In what form, then, shall the life of Christ be presented to Juniors?

The form to be desired is one that will vividly present a concrete picture of Jesus himself. The Greeks came to Philip saying, "Sir, we would see Jesus." So the Junior comes to the Sunday school with the need of being made acquainted with Jesus. As a little child, with a child's

limitations, he could have only childish ideas of Jesus. Mental growth has made it possible for him to become acquainted with Jesus, the man, as he lived and wrought on earth, and it is the obligation of the Sunday school to bring him near and make him real. He needs, literally, to see Jesus to see the manner of his life, to see his works and his conduct under the various circumstances portrayed in the gospel accounts. The conversation and statements of adults concerning the divinity of Jesus not infrequently cause children to think of him as an unnatural being, wholly unlike men, and these childish conceptions are a fruitful source of later unbelief. It is important that during these years the child shall be led to an acquaintance with the man Jesus of the historical records.

The narrative must move rapidly, presenting in quick succession deeds and mighty acts which manifest the power of Christ. It is Jesus as the doer of deeds of power and might in whom the Junior will be most interested and to whom he will be most impressed. It is not yet time for character analysis. That will come later. It is not necessary to define the moral quality of specific acts, nor is it desirable that the label of hero be attached. If the narrative presents the deeds of Jesus vividly and concretely his personality may be trusted to make its own impression. The Junior will come spontaneously to recognize the magnitude of the quality of the life as a whole and to realize that Jesus must come from God, for no man could do these mighty works that Jesus does "except God be with him." Having reached their own decisions concerning him these boys and girls may be depended upon to hold to them against the world.

Christ is to be presented as Lord and Saviour. The Junior recognizes authority without protest. In early childhood, when action is principally imitation, obedience is being trained by indirection; in these years obedience to Christ

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as Lord and King may be gained by recognition of his right to rule. The authority of Christ will be a natural inference made by the Junior himself as he sees his mighty works.

The child reared in a Christian environment is likely to come, and as we believe normally comes so gradually into a filial attitude toward God as Father and Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour that the process is an unconscious one. But at about this time, when the realization of the power to choose for oneself first comes, the child is for the first time in his life really capable of choosing, by a conscious, definite act of will to accept Jesus as his Lord and Saviour. This new possibility, together with the quickening of religious interest which also comes naturally at this time, presents a unique spiritual opportunity which every earnest teacher should recognize.

For the most part, lesson material should be in the form of stories of action. Sermons, moralizing and abstract discussions will have little effect with Juniors, for the abstract holds no interest for them. Stories are interesting to them and if the stories present a moral situation the pupils may be trusted to see its significance and construct its parallel for their own lives. We only bore them if we attempt to make an application for them. This is a difficult lesson for inexperienced teachers to learn, but it is an important one.

Let us emphasize the fact that in teaching Juniors the *life situation, that is, the thing that happened, is the lesson.* The idea that every verse of scripture is intended to teach some important moral truth has been so firmly fixed in the popular mind that it is very difficult for the Sunday school teacher to resist the temptation to stop after every verse quoted from the Bible to ask, "Now what does this teach us?" Such a process is tantalizing to the Junior. He does not care what the verse teaches. He wants to know what

happened next. We must depend for our lesson upon impression of the whole upon his mind. The time will come if we succeed in interesting him now, when he will be ready for lesson analysis, but that time is not yet.

In some of the parables of Jesus we have teaching material in story form well adapted to Juniors. Though discrimination must be exercised in choice, for in not a few of Jesus' parables the situation pictured is entirely beyond the range of the Junior's experience. In these cases it is better for the parables to be reserved for later use, than some of the parables, which present situations which have a parallel in the experience of boys and girls of Junior age, to awaken a keen interest. Compare the parable of the two foundations (Matt. 7. 16-29) and the parable of the unjust steward (Luke 16. 1-13). Which of these is more suitable for Juniors? Compare also the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10. 30-37) and the parable of the unrighteous judge (Luke 18. 1-8). Which of these would you use in teaching Juniors?

Where can such lessons be found? What does our study of the gospels suggest concerning possible sources for such lesson material as we have described? As between the synoptic gospels and the gospel of John, which has the larger amount of material adapted to Juniors? Of the synoptic gospels that of Mark is best adapted for teaching the life of Christ to children of this age. Its graphic quality, its rapidity of movement, its emphasis upon deeds rather than teachings, its vivid portrayal of the might and power of Jesus, are ideal qualities in lesson material for Juniors.

OTHER IMPORTANT REQUIREMENTS

What requirements as to lessons, other than those we have considered which have to do with form of presentation are made by Junior interests and needs?

Events should be presented in chronological order. In this period it is for the first time possible to give to the child a conception of the order of events in the life of Christ. His growing realization of time sequence makes it desirable to do this. He is interested in knowing the order in which events occurred. This also helps him to organize his knowledge and interpret it. He should be given an accurate conception of the course of the life and public work of Jesus. We should do for him what W. L. Hervey in Picture Work criticizes the Uniform Lessons for failing to do. He says, "Our course through the Bible—incident by incident, verse by verse, here a little, there a little, years of 'lessons,' but no idea even of the life of Christ as a whole—is not unlike the toilsome road traversed by the boy 'reading' Caesar as his first Latin author: so many separate, mutually repellent parts, but no wholes, no idea of what it is all about; or it may be compared to the route of the milkman—a stop at every other house, and never a good run."

Emphasis should be placed upon memorization. What has been said of these years as the memory period? The fact that repetition now will fix anything in mind gives added importance to memorization. First of all, material of immediate use in the life of the child should be memorized. The outline of the life of Christ also should be memorized, as well as all of the most important events of his life. Facts of value in understanding his life and interpreting his teaching likewise should be fixed in mind.

The background of the life of Christ should now be filled in by a study of the physical geography of the land of Palestine. During the early Junior years the child comes into possession of a sense of location which makes it possible for him to place the land of Palestine with some accuracy as related to other lands and the world as a whole.

A knowledge of the physical features of Palestine enable the Junior to visualize the events of Jesus' life with an accuracy that will be of much value to him. Now is the time for the making of outline maps. With but little difficulty the outline of the land of Palestine, with its principal divisions, its outstanding physical characteristics, and its chief places, can be fixed permanently in mind.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DAILY STUDY

1. Study Luke 2. 40-52. Try to put yourself in the place of a boy of ten and ask what values there would be in this statement to you.
2. Read Matt. 14. 13-33 as an account of a busy day in the life of Jesus. Is there action here of a kind, variety, and extent to attract to the interest of Juniors?
3. Read Mark 2. 1-12. Is there an authority manifested here which would appeal to a Junior? Can you find other examples?
4. Read Luke 10. 25-37. Does this seem to you to be a story which would be of interest to Juniors? What lesson is in it for them?
5. Read Matt. 7. 16-20. Is this good lesson material for children of Junior age? Shape a statement of your aim in teaching this. Compare your statement with that given in Lesson 44, International Graded Lessons, Junior Series, First Year.
6. Read John 4. 31-34. Would these words impress a Junior? Was this spirit of obedience to the Father's will dominant in Jesus' life? Find other examples of it.
7. Consider Mark 1. 32-35; Luke 6. 12. If Jesus' practice of prayer is held up frequently before Juniors, will it aid them in forming the habit of prayer?

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND OBSERVATION

1. Are boys and girls of Junior age commonly as familiar with the life of Christ as of the lives of heroes of whom they read in their study in day school?
2. Is the life of Christ commonly given the place it should have in the religious instruction of Juniors?
3. What aspects of the life and character of Jesus are peculiarly fitted to interest and benefit Intermediates?

LESSON VIII

TEACHING THE LIFE OF CHRIST TO INTERMEDIATES

How do boys and girls in their early 'teens differ from those nine to eleven years of age? What are their peculiar problems, their difficulties, and their temptations? What decisions have they to make which will have an important bearing upon their mature characters and upon their life courses?

What kinds of books appeal most strongly to Intermediates? Where will they find pictured the ideals, motives and purposes which will be of most help in shaping an inner life structure which will express itself in wise, noble, unselfish choices? Recall your own early youth. What books did you most enjoy during these years? What books are most popular among the high school pupils of your community? Answers to these questions will indicate that while the reading interests of individual pupils vary widely, and that while several types of literature are popular with Intermediates considered collectively, biography in the form of narrative has a very strong appeal to most boys and girls during these years.

THE SERVICE OF BIOGRAPHY TO INTERMEDIATES

Certain qualities inhering in biography constitute it the type of lesson material preeminently serviceable in the religious education of Intermediates. Let us consider these qualities briefly.

Biography is history written in terms of personal life. The kind of history which is a bare chronicle of facts supplies information to the intellect, but has no power to kindle

the soul. Biography acquaints us with persons and because of this kindles the emotions. If the story is of a man or woman who has accomplished a really great work, or who has succeeded against obstacles in carrying out a difficult purpose, its influence upon the soul often is strong and abiding.

Biography concerns itself with the springs of action and lays bare the inner life. It chronicles events, but it records them not alone for their own sake but for the sake of the light they shed on the underlying motives and purposes. In this way it opens up the inner life which, to the pupils of the fifteenth and sixteen especially, is the subject of so much thought and interest.

Biography supplies the companionship and friendship of great souls. Idealism has its rise in these years. The dreaming and yearning so characteristic of both boy and girl at this time mean aspirations and lofty desires. Intermediate is often depressed by his commonplace surroundings and the pettiness and irritability exhibited by those whom he knows best. He longs for fellowship and friendship which are satisfying and inspiring and these are supplied by biography which makes him acquainted with great souls and gives him the privilege of association with the noble and the heroic.

WHY THE LIFE OF JESUS IS OF SUPREME VALUE

Is all biography equally serviceable for the purpose of religious education? Are there reasons why the biography of Jesus is of supreme value? What reasons can we state?

Among the moral heroes of the race Jesus stands preeminent. In the purity of his motives, in the unselfish quality of his purposes, in the divinity of his ideals, in the righteousness of all his acts, Jesus towers high above other men.

He is preeminent in the realm of moral character. Of all men, his character alone reveals no flaw, no lack, no defect. Whereas the Junior worships the hero of action, and the Intermediate likewise admires achievement, the latter often is more strongly impressed with the moral strength of Jesus than with his great deeds.

Jesus is the universal hero. Other men whom we recognize as heroes are more or less disqualified by limitations of race, of nation, of tongue. But not so with Jesus. People of every nation, of every race, gladly recognized in him the highest type of manhood. Thus he appeals to all young people, everywhere, whom the Sunday school is called upon to teach. He is the one great world figure in the study of whose biography all may unite in perfect accord.

Jesus met and overcame the typical temptations of youth. The temptations which the gospels describe as having confronted Jesus at the beginning of his public ministry are those which always young life has to meet. In essence the three great temptations were to use his divine power (1) selfishly, for his own aggrandizement; (2) presumptuously, for vain display; and (3) profanely, in an alliance with the forces of evil. These are to be thought of, not so much as three temptations which come once to young people, as a recurring, almost constant temptation in their lives during the years of early and middle adolescence when the consciousness of the possession of new power is fresh and keen. In studying the biography of Jesus, Intermediates become acquainted with a moral Conqueror. No example could possibly be more significant for them.

The life of Jesus presents the preeminent example of service. Jesus has no equal in the social quality of his ideals and of his conduct. Where else can we find such sympathy, such constant prevailing desire to help others, such a spirit of sacrifice for others? He has been the inspiration of

uncounted thousands who have lived lives of selfsacrifice giving themselves in service to their fellowmen. This is the period in which the altruistic motive makes its first strong appeal, and because of this, the example of Jesus is at this time of incalculable value.

FORM OF PRESENTATION

How shall the life of Christ be presented to the child? What mediates? What are the requirements concerning the manner of its presentation which it is important to note?

His life should be so taught as to make him real. An obvious object is that our pupils shall come to know Jesus. The prime purpose is to acquaint them with him. It is easy for the teacher to lose himself in non-essentials and comparative unimportant particulars. For example, some knowledge of the history of New Testament times is necessary to a full understanding of events narrated in the gospels, but the prime purpose is not to teach history. We are to use history as a means of gaining an acquaintanceship with Jesus.

Our effort should be to present his life with a naturalness which will bring him near. To many, even to many devoted Christians, Jesus seems unreal. It is sometimes maintained that it is impossible to so teach his life that it will appear otherwise than as a dim and unreal figure from the misty past. This is not for a moment to be admitted. The Jesus of the gospels was a real man; in his youth he was a workman, a carpenter; throughout his life he showed himself capable of endurance and exertion, living much of the time out-of-doors, familiar with nature and all natural phenomena. He moved among men on intimate terms, with sympathy for all human needs, with equal friendliness to those of high station and for the outcast, a lover of children, a teacher, a physician, the helper and friend of all. We are to help our boys and girls thus to see

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that they may live in fellowship with him, feel the impress of his personality, be inspired with his love and care for others, and finally share his purpose.

It is not necessary for the teacher to attach the label of hero to the character of Jesus or to say overmuch about particular deeds or courses of action as being heroic. We may be sure if we succeed in picturing his life so that our pupils actually see it as it was lived among men; if we portray vividly the situations of his ministry, showing clearly the choices and courses of action which reflect his motives and his purposes, his life and character will make its own impression. Better a thousand times that the pupil should be led to a gradually heightening appreciation of the moral grandeur of Jesus until he spontaneously testifies to the impression which the matchless character has made upon him than that the teacher should repeatedly declare Jesus to be a hero when but slight impression has been made upon the pupil's mind.

Jesus should be presented as a leader. In the gospels Jesus is presented as the leader of a group, the twelve, who followed him, learning of him, and then went forth at his command to conquer a world. The organization of a company of disciples who looked to him as their leader resulted in the founding of the church. Nor is his leadership a thing of the past. He is a living leader, the great head of the church, and his followers are engaged to-day in world conquest in his name. His personal leadership, both in his relation to the Twelve and as directing the supreme world enterprise of our day, appeals to Intermediates and makes the biography of Jesus of supreme value to them.

As Jesus was leader of the band of Twelve, so he may be presented as the leader of the class, the one to whom this new group owes loyalty and unquestioning obedience. All of the tact and skill of the teacher should be used to consti-

tute the Intermediate class a group or "gang." As the social instinct ripens and the "gang" naturally widens it may be possible to make the church as a whole to be regarded as the group to which the Intermediate owes allegiance with Jesus still the great leader.

In presenting Jesus as a leader it should be made clear that he is far more than a human leader. He is a leader who is at the same time Master and Lord. Emphasis should be laid upon his tremendous program, a program that is worldwide and that reached into eternity. If the greatness of it is unfolded to Intermediates so that they realize its sweep and catch a vision of the lordship of Jesus, one of whom the gospels speak, they will be ready to declare, Lord, we "will follow thee whithersoever thou goest" and their purpose will be so deep that they will follow him if need be even to death.

Jesus should be presented as a friend and companion. Jesus is the Great Companion, "the friend that sticks closer than a brother." The biographies of other heroes are studied for the sake of knowing their character and for the inspiration that comes from the record of their deeds; the study of the biography of Jesus offers to Intermediates companionship with One who will enter into their lives to dissipate their sense of loneliness and be to them an ever present Friend and Helper.

Friendship with Jesus is one of the most attractive and significant forms in which the Christian life may be presented to Intermediates. It would be difficult to find a single term which comes nearer expressing the full meaning of the Christian life than this. It is to be remembered that it is Jesus' own term; one that comes directly out of his association with his disciples. "Ye are my friends, ye do whatsoever I command you . . ." The words which follow read as if they might have been intended

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pecially for Intermediates, they are so true to the conditions of their lives: "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth." The Junior child is a servant; to him Jesus is Master, King, Lord; he obeys the word of command not asking concerning its meaning or why it is given; henceforth, from these new days of freedom, of initiative, of spirit of inquiry, of new insight into the inner meaning of things—"Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." The teacher who has the grace and the insight to interpret to Intermediates this conception of Jesus as a Friend, and of the Christian life as friendship with him, will not fail in securing a response.

Jesus should be presented as Saviour. In your own life, when did you first realize a sense of sin? With most children the moral sense dawns some time during the later Primary or the Junior years, and a keen sense of moral failure, such as might lead a child to confess himself a sinner, with a realization of what the word implies, is not likely to come until the Intermediate years, particularly the fifteenth and sixteenth years. When it does come it may be profound, so deep and strong as to lead the adolescent into discouragement and despondency.

Jesus is the Saviour from sin. There is one name given under Heaven and among men whereby men may be saved, the name of Jesus. Some of the statements made concerning Jesus and the adaptability of the biography of Jesus to meet the needs of Intermediates may be made of others, but One only there is who is offered as a Deliverer, a Saviour from the power and the guilt of sin. The time to present Christ as a Deliverer from sin is when the sense of sin comes to be realized. Fortunate indeed is it if when

the boy or girl first becomes conscious of guilt the parent or teacher is at hand to tell of One who is able and willing to deliver.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DAILY STUDY

1. Study Matt. 4. 1-11. Consider the nature of the three temptations. What is their significance for Intermediates?
2. Read Luke 4. 16-30. Picture the whole scene culminating in verse 30. Now turn to John 7. 37-52. What dignity, what majesty, what power! Would this appeal strongly to Intermediates?
3. Study Mark 8. 27-38; John 6. 15. What self-sacrifice! Do you find here material to meet a need of Intermediates?
4. Consider Luke 22. 24-27 and John 13. 1-5, as showing Jesus' spirit of service of others. Estimate the value of this as an example to Intermediates.
5. Study Luke 6. 12-19; 8. 1-3; 9. 1-6; Matt. 28. 19, 20. How can the leadership of Jesus be made a real and present fact to Intermediates to-day?
6. Consider Mark 2. 13-17 as an example of the friendliness of Jesus. In connection with this think of his promises of perpetual friendship. What need of young people is met in this?
7. Study Mark 2. 1-12. What was the deepest need of the man? Is this also a need of Intermediate boys and girls? How would you present this as a lesson to Intermediates? Compare this presentation in the International Graded Lessons, Intermediate Series, Third Year, Lesson 10.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND OBSERVATION

1. In your observation, is the life of Jesus usually taught in Sunday school in such a way as to meet the interests of Intermediates?
2. Do the hymns about Jesus sung in your Sunday school contain in them anything to appeal to the heroic spirit? (Compare, for example, such a hymn as "Jesus Paid It All" with "We March to Victory," or "True-hearted, Whole-hearted, Faithful and Loyal.")
3. How would you teach the life of Christ to young people in order to help them most?

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LESSON IX

TEACHING THE LIFE OF CHRIST TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Have you ever tried to define to yourself your moral and spiritual needs which could be met by Bible study courses? To what extent do you consider your needs to be common to all young people? If you are so far removed from the period of later youth that you do not clearly recall your aims, hopes, fears, aspirations, desires, temptations and struggles during these years, seek to answer these questions from the standpoint of the young people you know most intimately.

What general principles, growing out of the interests and needs of young people, should be determinative in the selection of lesson courses?

The principle of election should be recognized. As the youth is now making his own decisions in many other matters he will appreciate the privileges of choosing for himself and at least the desire to choose should be recognized.

Courses should be offered which present satisfying ideals. The glowing idealism of young people of this age should be nurtured and strengthened. Material on which it can feed and grow should be provided.

Courses are required which give young people a Christian world view. Whether consciously or not the young person is engaged during these years in working out a philosophy of life, a world view, and it is exceedingly important that he be aided to attain to a Christian view of God and the world.

Courses are required which present opportunities and fields of service. The strong social impulse of these years

must not be allowed to weaken and die through lack of opportunities for expression.

Courses of training for service should be offered. The years from seventeen to twenty-five are the most favorable in life for special training. The comparative freedom of young people from heavy responsibilities, their intellectual activity, and their passion for service all combine to make this pre-eminently the best period for courses of training for leadership and teaching in church and Sunday school. To fail here is to lose a great opportunity.

THE SPECIAL ADAPTABILITY OF THE LIFE AND TEACHING OF JESUS

What special needs of young people are to be met by a study of the life and teaching of Jesus? What qualities in the gospels make them especially adaptable for use in teaching young people and in training them for service?

The teaching of Jesus was originally addressed principally to young people. The Twelve, for the most part, were young men when they were called into service by Jesus. Their exact ages are unknown. The life of the Master, we know, came to its tragic close at thirty-three. His teaching was given in the two or three years preceding. It has generally been supposed that some, probably the majority, of the apostles were younger than Jesus himself, and if we think of the period under consideration as embracing the years eighteen to twenty-four, it may be said to be very probable that a number of the apostles were in this period when Jesus addressed to them the teaching which we have in the gospels.

The teaching of Jesus appeals to the interests of young people. As we should expect, considering that much of it was originally addressed to young people, the teaching of Jesus now appeals to their interests. Had we taken up for

consideration particular portions of the gospels containing teachings of Jesus with a view to their use in teaching children in the successive periods passed under review we should have been compelled to say concerning a considerable part: "This should be reserved for middle or later adolescence." When studied under the guidance of an intelligent teacher, who has some understanding of the manners and customs of the Orient and a gift of spiritual insight, it is meat and drink to their souls.

The moral and ethical ideals of Jesus are the most inspiring and satisfying ever given to the world. His personality has been the supreme inspirational force in the life of successive generations of Christian men. In every generation it has proven its power to create high moral ideals in the minds of men of every age, class and condition. His life and his words are inseparable. In both, his standards are supreme, his principles most exalted. He alone meets the exacting demands of young people for moral perfection. A study of his life and teaching is fitted to satisfy and strengthen and make permanent their idealism. They inwardly desire a perfect example by which to pattern their living; they seek a supreme cause to which they may devote their lives; they are prepared for sacrifice to realize their purposes. The Sunday school through study of the life and teaching of Jesus is privileged to reveal to them God's ideal for their lives, and his service as the cause most worthy of their endeavors and sacrifices.

*The life and teaching of Jesus present "the clearest, simplest, worthiest, and truest view of God and the relation of God to men" anywhere to be found.*¹ As Christians, the world view we want our young people to get is the world view of Jesus. There are conceptions of God and views of God's relation to men, and of our relations to our

¹ Cf. *The Use of the Scriptures in Theology*, Clarke, page 57.

fellowmen, current in our day which are far removed from the teaching of Jesus. We are called upon to be Christians both in life and thought after the pattern of Jesus Christ. Views of God and social and ethical conceptions which are contrary to or fall below the standard set in the teaching of Jesus, whatever their source, are unworthy of his followers. In this period, when our young people are shaping for themselves their permanent religious beliefs, it is exceedingly important that the life and the teaching of Jesus be made a basis of study.

The gospels are in themselves training courses. The teaching of Jesus in the first three gospels was addressed originally to the disciples, much of it to the Twelve in pursuance of Jesus' purpose to train them to go out to preach and to teach in his name. That is to say, the teaching of Jesus was in the first place a training course, and it has lost none of its value for this purpose. Not only so; the gospels in their entirety as they have come down to us may be said to have been virtually training courses used by the early teachers of the church in teaching and training converts to the faith. For what are the gospels? As we have pointed out previously, they are not complete records or biographies of Jesus. They are simply the "deposit of the teaching of the church" during the *first decades* of its existence. They are material "already fashioned for the work of the teachers. Incomplete from one point of view, from another they are wonderfully perfect . . . They are in the form in which the teachers of the first century put them"¹

More emphasis should be placed in teacher training courses upon the life and teaching of Jesus. Here we are at the center of the Christian religion. While in preparation for our work as his teachers, we should give ourselves earnestly to contemplation of his life and character, and to t

¹ *How to Teach the Bible*, Mitchell, page 135.

study of his words, that when we go out to teach in his name we may fitly and fully represent him.

FORM AND CONTENT OF COURSES

In what form can the life and teaching of Jesus be best presented to young people? What should be the content of the courses? Certain general principles may be stated:

Direct study of the gospels should be provided. It has sometimes been said that there is too much teaching about the Bible and not enough teaching of the Bible. This may easily be true when the case is that of young people and the life and teaching of Jesus. Study about the gospels will not be as helpful or satisfying as study of the gospels. A critical study of questions of authorship, date, and literary structure may yield important information but fail entirely in deepening or strengthening the religious impulses. The direct study of the gospels for their religious values is the most important need of most young people in our Sunday-school classes.

The example and teaching of Jesus should be brought to bear upon the practical problems of young people. The personal problems of young life are many and perplexing. The youth is seeking to adjust himself to his own peculiar place in the world. For many Senior young people this constitutes the most insistent and pressing problem. Out of this many lesser problems arise. Numerous problems also grow out of their relationship to others in the home, in business, and in social life. "What ought I to do?" the sensitive conscience of the young man or the young woman constantly asks. All of the problems of young people, which they meet in daily life, should be discussed in the light of the principles enunciated in the teaching of Jesus and exemplified in his life.

The life and teaching of Jesus should be used to deepen

and enrich the devotional life. These are years when the spiritual life can readily be deepened and the opportunity should not pass unused. Surely no more valuable means can be found than the devotional study of the gospel. Henry Drummond was once asked to suggest three courses of Bible study that would directly influence spiritual growth. "I would recommend," he said, "that you study, first, the life of Christ; second, the life of Christ, and third, the life of Christ." Out of this study there should come an abiding love for Jesus Christ, a more intense loyalty, and a permanent habit of daily and hourly communion,—a renewed and heightened appreciation of the reality and the value of friendship with the Saviour. The realization that he enters as the most intimate of all friends into the experiences of daily life,—sharing its burdens and disappointments, and that every trial borne, every temptation overcome, and every service rendered is above all else for his sake transforms and illumines the most commonplace life.

Some classes will desire to study the teaching of Jesus in systematic form. Not all classes of young people will be prepared for an intensive, systematized study of Jesus' religious teachings, but such a course should be included in an elective group. What did Jesus teach concerning God? What did he teach about man? About sin? About salvation? About the kingdom of God? What did he teach about himself, his nature, his mission, and the significance of his death? These are fundamental subjects of Christian belief. They are also subjects prominent in Jesus' teaching and the study of them should be made available to young people.

The opportunity should be offered for the study of the social teachings of Jesus. Is there material in the gospel for the nurture and direction of the altruistic ideals and purposes of youth? Did Jesus have aught to say concerning

social duties? Did he enunciate principles which have application to-day in social relations, in business, in community life, and in the state? Without question much of the inspiration for modern social reform has come directly from the example and the teaching of Jesus. No finer introduction to the study of social duties can be found than a course based upon the social teaching of Jesus. It provides an unexcelled means of developing and using the latent resources of social service in which young life is so rich.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DAILY STUDY

1. Read John 1. 35-51. Recall that Jesus was at this time a young man of about thirty. Picture this group as a company of young men, some of them younger than Jesus. Would this help you in teaching the life of Christ to young people?

2. Consider the moral and ethical standards of Jesus: perfection, Matt. 5. 48; purity, Matt. 5. 8; loyalty, Luke 9. 62; self-sacrifice, Matt. 16. 24, 25. Are these ideals which appeal strongly to young people?

3. What was the one all-inclusive principle of Jesus? Read John 13. 34, 35; 15. 12; Matt. 22. 34-40. Is this the supreme law of life to be set before young people?

4. What importance did Jesus attach to serving our fellowmen? Verify your answer from his teachings.

5. Study Matt. 12. 9-14. Note the appeal of Jesus to the reason. Is this a teaching method of large value in teaching young people?

6. What was the personal attitude of Jesus toward those who looked to him for instruction? Read Mark 10. 21. Is this attitude of sympathy and friendly love an important requisite in a teacher?

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND OBSERVATION

1. Is the question, "What would Jesus have me do?" practical as a principle of guidance for everyday life?

2. How may the gospels be used in training young people for Christian service?

3. What place should be given to the life of Christ in a curriculum for adults?

LESSON X

ADULTS AND THE LIFE OF CHRIST

Adult life differs from the periods of childhood and youth in that it spans a very much larger number of years. The periods which we have had under consideration thus far in our study embrace but three to six years each, while the adult period begins, properly speaking, at the close of adolescence, that is, at about twenty-five, and continues to the end of life.

STUDY COURSES FOR ADULTS

What is the aim of the Sunday school in its work with adults? Can you formulate your own statement of aim? The Adult Department should be worthy of being called a school of religion for adults. As such it should be its purpose to deepen, enrich, and strengthen the religious life of all its members. It should aim to make all of its members loyal, intelligent, efficient Christians. Consider the young people who enroll in the Adult Department of the Sunday school at the beginning of adult life may continue in attendance upon its sessions for a period of fifteen to sixty years. What kind of a program of study is required in order that the Sunday school in the course of these years may fulfill its ministry to them? Consider, again, the range of age represented in the adult membership of a Sunday school. Are the religious needs of elderly people identical with those of young people who have just entered the first period of adult life? As these questions are pondered does it not become evident that the Sunday school's program of study for adults must be broad, comprehensive

and varied? What types of courses should be included in a program of study, or curriculum, for adults?

Advanced courses in the Bible should be offered. In thousands of Sunday schools, young people are now being graduated from the Graded Lesson Course. Through this course many of them have become familiar with real Bible study to an extent practically unknown in connection with the Sunday school in earlier days. If these Sunday schools are to command the continued interest of these graduates they must provide a program of advanced Bible study. Young people who have seriously addressed themselves to the study of the intermediate and senior graded courses will not be satisfied with haphazard and fragmentary Bible instruction in adult classes. A considerable number of courses which provide specialized Bible study should be offered.

Elementary Bible courses should be provided. There will always be in the Sunday school some adults who do not have an elementary working knowledge of the Bible,—new converts or new recruits to the Sunday school whose early training in the Bible was neglected. For these, elementary courses will be needed.

Training courses for lay workers should be provided. The Adult Department should share with the Senior Department the responsibility for training workers for school and church. A class of men in training for work with boys and another for service in official positions in church or school would be a possibility in many schools. Adult church members should be trained for effective cooperation in all of the modern movements for social betterment. The church will be able to give constructive guidance to the great movement now on for social reconstruction only as it instructs its members concerning the significance of the movement and trains them for participation in it.

Training courses for parents are needed. One of the

most acute needs of modern society is for courses for parents in child nature and child nurture, particularly the moral and religious nurture of the child in the home. Our Sunday schools are failing with many of their pupils because of a lack of positive home training. In many cases it is not that parents are disinterested in the religious welfare of their children. They do not know how to proceed in order to develop righteous moral character and normal religious interest and activity.

Such other courses should be offered as are needed to make men and women intelligent, loyal, useful Christians. The Bible will never be displaced as the great, permanent source book of spiritual truth and inspiration, but the education of the adult in religion involves more than Bible instruction. Courses in various other subjects such as church history, the development of Protestant thought, and the rise and progress of Christian Missions, are required and should have a place in the adult curriculum.

THE PLACE OF COURSES IN THE LIFE AND TEACHING OF JESUS

What place have the life and teaching of Jesus in such a curriculum of adult study as we have outlined? It will help us to answer this question if we consider the Master's procedure with the men whom he called to discipleship and service.

How did Jesus train the Twelve? What importance did Jesus attach to his work of teaching and training his disciples? In answering the question remember that he devoted to them the most of his time and energy. What was the result? Would the twentieth century have known so much as the names of these twelve men if they had not been taught of Christ? He called them to follow him and taught them, and who can measure their service to the

world? It is evident to anyone who studies the gospels that Jesus placed a high estimate upon the value of his teaching. Will it not do in some measure for modern men what it did for men of the first century? Jesus not only taught his disciples,—he brought his personality to bear upon them. Is this also accomplished when to-day we lead men to study the life of Jesus? What is the meaning of John 15. 26; 16. 13, 14 in this connection?

The life and teaching of Jesus should be given the central place in the program of adult study in the Sunday school.

COURSES WHICH SHOULD BE OFFERED

Read again what was said in the preceding lesson concerning the form and content of courses for young people in the life and teaching of Jesus. To what extent is this statement applicable to courses for adults? It will be agreed, we think, that certain of these principles are equally applicable to courses for both young people and adults; others, if applied to courses for adults, require adaptation, while some few of them are applicable only to courses for young people. The value of the subject is not exhausted by the brief study which may be given to it in the senior years. As Bishop McDowell has said, "Now the mastery of this teaching in its manner and its substance, its form and its essence, its relation to activity and to personality, its eternal meaning under the forms of time, its germinal quality in all time, its universal meaning expressed in local terms, its living principles in its particular statements, its philosophy and its ethical quality, its religious value and literary perfection, its historic interest and world-wide application,—the mastery of this teaching is the supreme intellectual achievement of life. Upon this task one might spend his years."¹

¹In the School of Christ, page 51.

What are some of the most important paths of approach to this exhaustless field? What are some general subjects of study which we must not overlook in forming a curriculum for adults?

Jesus and everyday life. If a single subject were to be chosen as a designation for the teaching of Jesus it might well be the principles of life. "The immediate subject of his teaching is unmistakable. It is conduct, life, morality, character . . . His first teaching is of duty, conscience, humanity, love, the conduct of life."¹ We seek in vain in the gospels for a moral code by which to regulate our conduct. Almost all of Jesus' teaching grows out of actual life situations. In these concrete situations Jesus gave people great moral principles which he led them to apply for themselves. This alone is sufficient to give his teaching universal significance applicable for all time. Conditions of life have changed, but the moral and spiritual needs of men are much the same in the twentieth as in the first century. Men and women long for help on the practical problems of everyday living. They are immensely more interested in securing light and aid on problems of conduct than they are in theories of ethics or the doctrinal speculations of theologians. "What would Jesus have me do?" is a question which never fails to interest. Is it a vain question? By no means. We cannot do a more helpful thing than to acquaint them with Jesus' principles of life and to guide them in applying his principles to everyday problems.

The social program of Jesus. Did Jesus promulgate a social program? Do we find regulations in the gospels for the suppression of poverty, for improvement of conditions of living, for lowering the death rate, or for elimination of the social evil? Jesus was first of all a teacher of religion.

¹Peabody, *Jesus Christ and the Christian Character*, page 72.

He was not a social reformer in the modern sense of the term. He enunciated no "social program," as such. Yet it is less than a full statement of the truth to say that time and again profound social changes have resulted from a sincere effort to understand the full import of his teachings and to apply them to existing conditions. Are there social implications of the teaching of Jesus which are significant as applied to the problems of to-day? Is there material in the gospels with which to build a new conscience on not one but many ancient evils? To these questions, none but an affirmative answer can be given. Moreover, men and women everywhere are vitally interested in social questions and this approach to their study will attract and benefit many.

The religious teaching of Jesus. It is to be remembered that the teaching work of Jesus was all the more vital because it was truth applied to life, not truth cast into a completely rounded system. Better a single utterance which meets an actual need of life than volumes of dry, lifeless, systematized doctrine worked out apart from human needs. Does not the gathering together of Jesus' teaching upon a single important subject, such, for example, as the kingdom of God, or upon the nature of God and his relations to men, meet an actual need of our lives? So with other fundamental subjects of Christian belief. The study of the teaching of Jesus in systematized form should therefore be made available for adults, as well as for young people. (See page 238.)

Critical study of the gospels. The average man has neither time nor inclination for extended critical study. Questions of authorship, date of composition, sources, transmission and purity of the text do not particularly concern him. He is willing to leave these problems to scholars and to accept their verdict without questioning. Ordinarily, therefore, there is little call for the critical study of the

gospels in the Sunday school. Exceptional situations exist, however, in which such a study might be pursued with great profit. For three quarters of a century the documents composing the New Testament have been subjected to prolonged and searching examination. At times controversy has raged fiercely. As a result the historical basis of Christianity has been wonderfully confirmed. The foundations of our religion stand secure. The historical Christ has more nearly universal acknowledgment than ever before. These results, together with some acquaintance with the processes and lines of evidence which have produced them, should be made available to groups of adults whose faith and life would be helped by such knowledge.

RESULTS TO BE EXPECTED

What gain may be expected to accrue to adults from the study of the life and teaching of Jesus? What will it do for them?

It will make Christ real. For the adult this is something different than for the intermediate (see page 228), just as the needs of mature life differ from those of the early 'teens. Long ago Martin Luther declared that the supreme office of the Bible is to show us Christ and in him all that we need to know even if we never see any other book. The gospels will do more for us than to present a record of facts in the life of Jesus. They pulsate with divine life. If we come to them with open, receptive minds they will bring Christ near, even into our own hearts, and make him real to us as the One through whom God supplies our every need.

It will reveal God. What was Jesus' word to Philip when Philip said to him, "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us"? Read John 14. 8, 9. In this Jesus declared that he unveiled God. Constantly, in the lives of adults there is a tendency for the vision of God to grow dim. To multi-

tudes of men and women God seems far removed from human life, a vague and unreal figure. A supreme need is for some means by which the Heavenly Father shall be brought near and made a real and living Presence. In the Christ of the gospels just this need is met. God is brought very near to those who find Jesus their Teacher, Friend, and Saviour. Jesus is the supremely convincing testimony of the fact of God and of the character of God. "If one will not hear that biography of love, that memoir of pity, that historic record of redeeming grace, neither will he believe though one rise from the dead."

It will reveal man to himself. The average adult needs just this revelation. The years of middle life bring disillusionment. What is to make up for the fading of the heightened colors with which youth tinged the most commonplace things of life? What is to take the place of the keen zest and enthusiasm of early years? Is everything now to become common? Are the high values to be lost out of life and the soul's attitude to become that of indifference and spiritual stolidity? How may the vision of youth, renewed, refined, and spiritualized, be imparted to the soul as a permanent possession? Just this service the study of the life and teaching of Jesus is fitted to render. In him we have a revelation of a triumphant spiritual life. In him we see what God intends for every son of man. In him we find the spiritual dynamic to revitalize youth's motives and purposes. In him we find power for the realization of our highest ideals.

Contact with Christ imparts life and health to the soul. The earliest disciples found companionship with Jesus to be a savor of life unto life. In ways which they could not explain the influence of his words and his personality reached down to the roots of their being, affecting feeling, thought, and will, and effecting a transformation of their

whole natures. "Disciple," we are to remember, means learner. Those to-day who have the spirit of discipleship find that contact with him through the written word has a like efficacy. A missionary to New Guinea writes:

I have myself seen murderers and cannibals live peaceful lives. I have seen shameless thieves and robbers become honest; I have seen the quarrelsome and selfish become kind and gentle. But I have never heard of such changes arising from any other agency than that of the Word whose entrance bringeth life, and whose acceptance is the power of God unto salvation.

The influence holds among all classes and conditions of men. Everywhere and always Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DAILY STUDY

1. Read the request of the disciples in Luke 11. 1. This is the only recorded instance of the disciples asking Jesus to teach them. Have we come to Jesus with a like request?

2. Consider Jesus' preference for teaching individuals or a small group rather than the multitude. What does this indicate concerning his method?

3. What is the explanation of the lack of emphasis upon organization in the gospels? Consider the significance of these passages in relation to the question: John 10. 10; 6. 63.

4. The teaching of Jesus was almost entirely presented in concrete, life situations. In teaching adults we cannot reproduce the situations, but we can bring together from various situations teachings on certain great themes. Do you find any trace of an effort of this kind in the gospels? Study the preface to Luke's gospel 1. 1-4. What evidence do you find in Matthew of this having been done?

5. Read John, chapters 1-7. Disregard entirely the chapter and verse divisions, and read for the general impression of the whole. Recall the words of an eminent preacher: "I think my analysis of books is the result of having read them on an average from forty to fifty times."

6. Continue your reading of John, taking to-day chapters 8-14.

7. Complete the reading of John, chapters 15-21.